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CHAPTER 8

THE ARAB CONQUEST AND THE RISE OF ISLAM IN NORTH AFRICA

PROBLEMS OF SOURCES

The Arab conquests, which created a great new empire and led to the establishment of Islam as one of the great religions of the world, are one of the traditional landmarks of history. For European historians they are a part of that perennial problem, the transition from the ancient to the medieval world. Conventionally it was the conquests themselves in the seventh century AD which were decisive; or, with greater refinement, it has been suggested that the landmark should be placed in the eighth, when the caliphate was transferred from Damascus to Baghdad. The most celebrated opinion of the last fifty years is that of Pirenne, who argued that the Arab conquest of the eastern and southern Mediterranean cut off western Europe from the long-distance trade on which its economy had depended, and drove it back into rudimentary self-sufficiency. The criticism to which this theory has been subjected, however, illustrates the elementary point that the introduction of a new language into the sources, whatever it may be said to represent, has created a separate discipline to rank with the study of medieval Latin and Byzantine Greek among the successors to the Classics. At the same time the primarily European concern of Pirenne's hypothesis indicates the major interest of historians and the disparity of these disciplines in terms of the attention each has hitherto received. In this way the problems of Mediterranean history have been complicated rather than clarified; there has been neither a global treatment nor an adequate specialization. It is therefore ironic that the Arab conquests and the appearance of Islam in Africa should have been judged by those historians concerned with the more recent discipline of African history to represent the arrival on the continent of a unifying factor not only in terms of culture, but more basically in terms of source materials. The same strictures apply. The question of continuity and discontinuity is obscured by the problems of a new language and its literature.

How complicated these problems are, and how intimately they concern the underlying problems of the society, begins to appear from

the fact that the earliest extant works in Arabic date from the end of the eighth century AD, and that the written tradition to which they belong cannot be considered to be much earlier than the middle of that century. They belong to a growing religious or semi-religious literature which rapidly attained great size and variety. To compensate for this late development, this literature is preoccupied with the historical origins and growth of the Muslim community, purporting to give, inter alia, a detailed and faithful account of sayings and doings which were carefully remembered until they were at last written down. It has therefore yielded a coherent story of the appearance of the new religion among the Arabs, and of the subsequent Arab conquests, which has been generally accepted as basically correct. The gist of this story is that the religion we know was in existence at the death of the Prophet Muḥammad in AD 632, and was the inspiration of the conquests which followed. But the possibility of the false tradition has been a professional preoccupation of Muslim scholars ever since these traditions were circulated in writing, and it is generally conceded that despite their care, many are spurious. From the existence of such traditions, the late Joseph Schacht went on to reopen the question of the origin of the *sharī'a*, the Islamic Law which is central to Muslim belief and practice, showing first the debt to behaviour, external influence and law-making over the first hundred years after the conquests, and, secondly, the manner in which the rules and regulations of the Muslim community were arranged and authorized over the next hundred years by systematic ascription to the Prophet. This is quite other than an attempt to isolate a residual original from subsequent accretions; it is a demonstration of the way in which a whole corpus of narrative was established because of the care of Muslim scholars to obtain a single divine authority for arguments, beliefs and practices coming from different times and different places. Each item in the corpus is accordingly suspect, and those which have been declared false often represent simply the failure of a doctrine to gain acceptance.

A similar opinion has been entertained about the *Sīra*, the traditional biography of Muḥammad – that its details have been worked out in accordance with the interests and ideas of a later age about the life that a prophet should have led. In particular, the question is beginning to arise about the Koran, the Book of God which was revealed to Muḥammad, that far from being an established possession of the Muslim community from the beginning, it took its present form along with the Law in the course of scholarly argument which culminated in the ninth

century in the consecration of the text as a heavenly original.[1] Whatever the lengths to which such arguments are taken, they reveal that the Arabic literature of the ninth century turned to a very large extent upon a vision of the past established in accordance with the criteria of a subsequent period. The preoccupation with the historical origins and development of the Muslim community, the painstaking record of what had been said and done, are seen as devices without any necessary relationship to anything which may have happened. The multitude of specific statements about the past, which were the units of knowledge and the data of argument, turn out to be formal requirements whose necessity was only established towards the end of the eighth century as a means of giving precise expression to contemporary opinion. In no sphere was the apparently historical statement so highly developed as in the case of the Law, but, required for religious purposes, it became central to Arabic learning and literature at large. Robert Brunschvig, for example, has convincingly shown that the work of the earliest extant Muslim historian of Egypt and North Africa, the ninth-century Egyptian writer Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, is to a considerable extent a collection of specifically legal traditions and, furthermore, of historical anecdotes employed in the same way to justify religious and political opinions.[2]

Thus the narrowly historical interest of the material derives in the last rather than the first place from a literature whose development is intrinsic to that of Islam itself. The problem for the historian is twofold. On the one hand it is of a kind familiar to students of Judaism and Christianity: to use the literature as evidence for the formation rather than the elaboration of the new religion. On the other, it is to perceive what happened before the process of formation was complete and the vision of the past took shape. It is fortunate for the historian of Africa that the question of Arabian origins lies strictly outside his competence. Yet the work of Brunschvig shows that the problem is still real. Whatever the ultimate conclusions, it is now unwise for the African historian to rely without hesitation upon the traditional story. In practice this means that it is necessary to dissociate the appearance of Islam, as the religion we know, from the Arab conquests. The presence of a religious element in those conquests is certain, but it is hard to see what form it took within the general Judaeo-Christian tradition. It may have been

[1] For specific references, see the bibliography for this chapter.

[2] R. Brunschvig, 'Ibn Abdal'hakam et la conquête de l'Afrique du Nord par les Arabes: étude critique', *Annales de l'Institut des Études Orientales* (Algiers), 1942–7, 6, 108–55.

apocalyptic; it probably laid stress upon meeting, prayer and preaching; and doubtless it acted as a bond for the community. But rather than go further, it is preferable to concentrate on this community of conquerors, its composition and growth.

Here at last it is a question of isolating a residual historical truth from statements which, whatever their origin, have been placed on an equal footing for the purpose of religion. Legal traditions were late in appearing, and drew partly upon less formal material, of which there is a glimpse in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam. Under the name of *khabar* (pl. *akhbār*), 'information', such material dealt for example with the doings of individuals and families under the empire. Despite exaggeration, falsification and legend, it might be thought to represent the historical consciousness of a community before this was shaped by formal criteria. It should have transmitted to the extant sources a quantity of reliable information. The difficulty is to decide whether the standards of acceptance and rejection at work in each successive phase in the development of the written tradition were such as to subvert the greater part, if not the whole. Here the African historian is more positively fortunate. Writing some years before Schacht, Dennett justified a fundamental confidence in the Arabic sources for the administration and taxation of the empire in the seventh and eighth century, by pointing to the great variety of conflicting statements which they contain. This, he considered, refuted the claim of Caetani that the story they offered was a stereotype, and suggested that they faithfully recorded the variety of practice in the various provinces.[1] While Caetani may have been wrong to give the impression of uniformity, it is clear from Schacht that each statement has in fact been shaped by jurisprudence. Many traditions, notably those relating to the two caliphs 'Umar I and 'Umar II, must be regarded as false, while the remainder, which make a fundamental distinction between land taken at the conquest '*anwatan*, 'by force', and land taken '*ahdan*, 'by compact', do not so much record what actually happened as translate it into legal terms. That the translation stayed close to the original, however, can be shown not only from the fact that the accounts vary from province to province. In Egypt they are substantially borne out by the papyrus documents which have survived from the whole of this period from the seventh to the ninth century AD, at first almost all in Greek, changing in the course of the eighth century to Arabic.

[1] D. C. Dennett, *Conversion and the poll-tax in early Islam* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 3–13, esp. 11, with reference to L. Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam*, 10 vols. (Milan, from 1905).

The Egyptian papyri form an invaluable record; they also demonstrate that the written tradition, when it made its appearance in Egypt from the middle of the eighth century onwards, was indebted to an archive going back to the establishment of a regular administration under Arab control. The importance of such an archive can be gauged from the unsatisfactory nature of the story of the conquest of the lands further west, where no regular administration was established before the beginning of the eighth century at Kairouan (more properly Qayrawān) in modern Tunisia, and Cordoba in Spain. Even then, no documents other than coins survive, and the matter is complicated by the fact that the earliest writers on the subject are Egyptian or Oriental. The local historical tradition did not begin to appear in writing before the tenth century AD, and by the time the extant works in this tradition were compiled between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, information about the very early period has become suspiciously orderly, fitted into a well-developed scheme of history in which the place of Islam and its adherents is both central and secure. Nevertheless, the fact of an archive in the western capitals may be assumed from the beginning of regular administration after the year 700, and this lends a little substance to the account of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam until he begins to rely from about 725 onwards on the contemporary witness of the first writers in the Egyptian tradition.

The value of these first writers is still very problematic, and it is fortunate that the literature can be supplemented from the end of the seventh century onwards by the archaeological investigation of art and architecture. The principal remains have been examined and described in detail by Cresswell from a base in Egypt and the Middle East, and by Georges Marçais and his successors from a base in Tunisia. Their work is at present being greatly extended by the systematic excavation, not only of Muslim sites, but even more important of sites which show a continuity from the late classical period onwards. One obvious and natural conclusion is that the peoples concerned did not disappear, but slowly changed. It goes to the heart of the question of Islamic origins, which is commonly put in terms of the failure of Christianity to survive south of the Mediterranean except as the religion of a minority in Egypt. For the moment it is more important that the tradition of the Coptic Church of Egypt offers the only substantial alternative to the Muslim version of the conquest and subsequent history of the country. This tradition is by no means independent. The cardinal figure in its composition, the tenth century Sāwīrūs (Severus) b. Muqaffaʿ, Bishop

of Ashmunayn in Upper Egypt, had the record of the Patriarchate of Alexandria down to his own day assembled and translated from Greek and Coptic into Arabic. Severus was especially concerned to refute the work of a rival, Eutychius, known as Sa'id b. Baṭrīq, the head of the small Orthodox Church in the country. Eutychius composed a history from the time of Adam which naturally opposed the claim of the Coptic or Monophysite, the Ya'qūbī or Jacobite Church, to be the true church of the Apostle St Mark in Egypt. He too wrote in Arabic, and found the Muslim scheme sufficiently convenient to arrange his later material by the reigns of the caliphs.

The content of both Severus and Eutychius is in consequence very similar to the Muslim material, even when it presents an opposite point of view. Accounts of different origins have been consolidated in a tale of Christian virtue in which heretics are abominable, but docility towards the Muslim regime conforms to the disposition of the world in the eyes of the Muslim historians. The varying value of the information is concealed, although the bias of particular authors is detectable. Severus and his team of translators were governed to some extent by what they could find in the monastery of St Macarius. It is possible that from time to time Muslim versions have been appropriated for a Christian purpose. The selectivity of the *History of the Coptic patriarchs* nevertheless appears from a comparison with a previous work in the same tradition. This survives only in an Ethiopic translation of an Arabic version of passages originally in Greek and Coptic, but for this reason must be considered a composition like that of Severus's, a ninth- or tenth-century edition of the work of the original author, John Bishop of Nikiou in Lower Egypt at the end of the seventh century. Thus edited, John's *Chronicle* is interesting, since its scheme, an account of Egypt in the context of a universal history culminating in a Muslim dominion, is precisely that of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, with the difference that the appearance of Christianity is naturally the cardinal event, and the present regime is one of 'pagan impostors' from whom the faithful have been preserved as before from 'perfidious heretics'. Notwithstanding, it contains what are certainly the earliest accounts of the Arab conquests.

THE ARAB OCCUPATION OF EGYPT

Severus deals with the Arab conquest of Egypt, but is brief to the point of ignoring almost everything except the reappearance of the

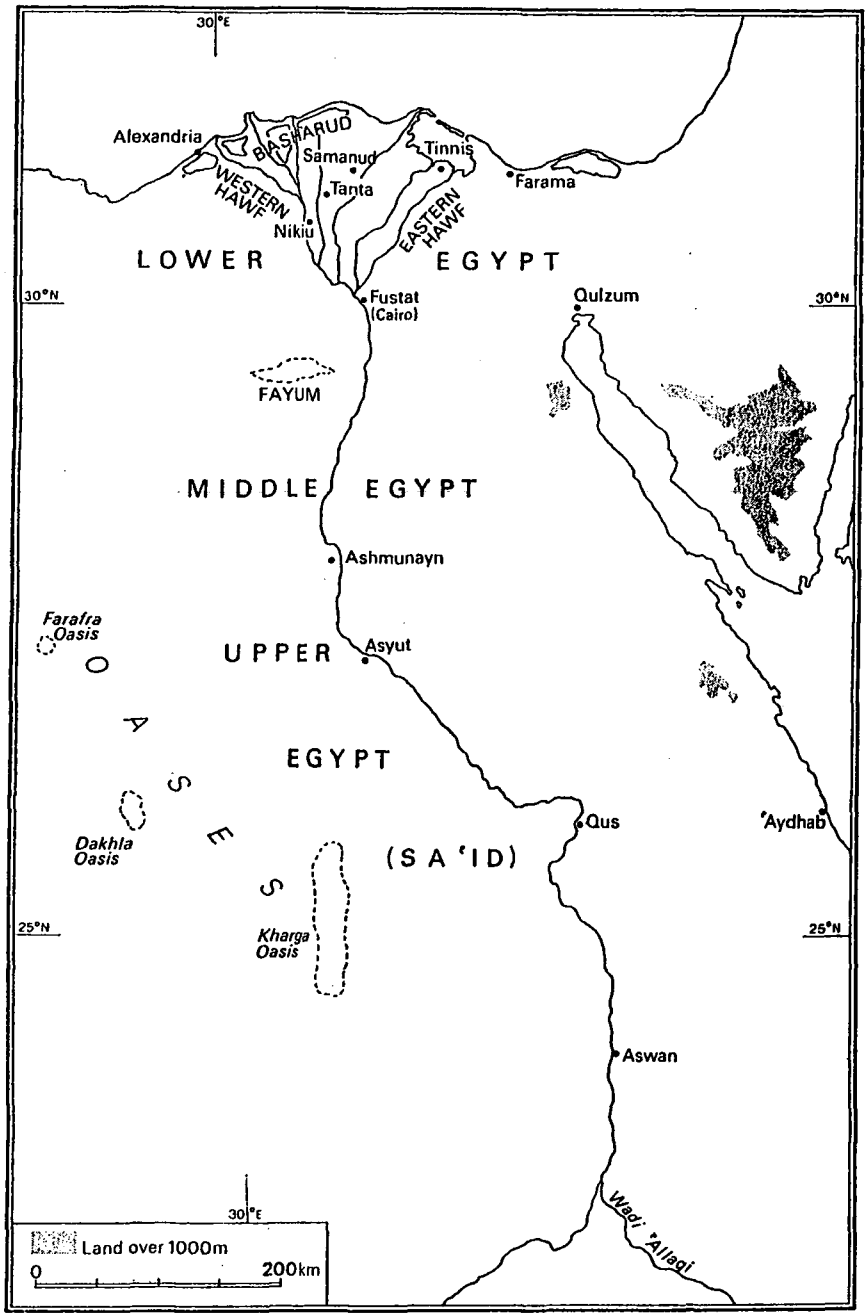
Coptic Patriarch Benjamin I after years of hiding from Byzantine persecution directed by 'al-Muqawqas'. Eutychius says more, but merely to identify 'al-Muqawqas', whom he calls the financial superintendent, as a 'Jacobite', an heretical Copt, who betrayed the country to the Arabs out of hatred of 'Rome'. It was the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiou which was largely used by Butler to settle the identity of 'al-Muqawqas', and establish a convincing account. The mysterious 'Muqawqas' was Cyrus, Bishop of Phasis in Colchis, appointed by the Emperor Heraclius not only as an Orthodox or 'Melkite' Patriarch of Alexandria in the last of many attempts by Constantinople to recover the Church in Egypt from the Monophysite heresy, but also as the governor of the country. When the Arabs invaded the country from Palestine under 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ in December 639, it was Cyrus who first defended and then negotiated the surrender of the fortress of Babylon at the head of the Delta during the years 640 and 641. After a brief dismissal, he returned to Egypt to negotiate the surrender of Alexandria, the Byzantine capital, in 642. As Butler saw it, the problem was to account for the motives of a man who could so capitulate, even though Alexandria in 641 had proved impregnable. Did he hope to remain as governor under the Arabs, dying before his plans could mature?

The question of Cyrus's treachery, however, depends on a view of the situation in Egypt as a three-cornered contest between the Monophysite Copts, the Orthodox Greeks, and the Muslim Arabs. Cyrus, the Orthodox Greek, is then an evil genius who weakens the Byzantine regime by persecution of its heretical subjects, only to turn traitor to his religion and his king. This theme of religions and races is certainly that of the later sources, both Muslim and Christian. It is not so clearly that of John of Nikiou. The confusion of his narrative was remarked by Butler, who considered that in this section of the work many sentences and pages had been displaced at some stage preceding the Ethiopic translation. In some cases this appears to be true; in particular, the absence of the passage dealing with some thirty years from the accession of the Emperor Heraclius in 610, resuming only with the Arabs, or 'Ishmaelites', already in the country, makes it hard to understand what follows. There are however two notable inconsistencies. Cyrus is on the one hand a tyrant and on the other a tragic figure acting in the best interests of the community. 'Amr, the Arab leader, appears as both a cruel oppressor and a benevolent ruler. It may be suggested that the principal confusion of the narrative arises from a conflation of two

alternative accounts whose attributions have been lost in the course of translation. What then emerges is the sketch of a situation which does not lend itself to simple categories.

Granted the presence of alternative versions, it is quite likely that two apparently dissimilar events are in fact the same. There is however a strong theme of collaboration with the Arabs on the part of both governors and governed. Sometimes this seems directed against the imperial government and its church, as in the initial account of fighting in the Fayum, and the mention of two worthies, Kalājī and Sābendīs, who had defected. Elsewhere, renegades take up arms against their fellows, and specifically, it would seem, against the Jacobites. These reports may be compared with those which illustrate a second theme, the enmity between the various sectors of the population, between the inhabitants of Lower Egypt and those at the head of the Delta, between the factions of the Blue and Green at Alexandria, and between Melkites and Jacobites. Both themes shade off into that of 'Amr's oppression, with which is linked the complicity of high officials. The prefect George builds a bridge to 'Amr's command. The prefect Menas and his two henchmen, who hate the Egyptians, are employed by 'Amr to exact forced labour by terror. John, prefect of Alexandria, on the other hand, collaborates to protect his charges. Cyrus himself, at the head of a party favouring accommodation, against a background of metropolitan Byzantine politics and in the face of popular opposition, acts in what he believes to be the best interests of the Egyptians. The brutal persecutor has another side, which is not that of a traitor.

Certainly there is no clear-cut polarity. The invaders themselves appear as only one among many conflicting parties. Their principal successes, the negotiation of the surrender of Babylon in 640/1, and that of Alexandria in 641/2, take place against a background of confused warfare in the Delta over two or three years. The campaign took the form of an advance up the right branch of the Nile to Babylon, then down the left branch to Alexandria. But not only did 'Amr depend to an unspecified extent upon local recruits and local allies; the opposition had its moments also. Kalājī and Sābendīs are won back to the loyalists. The Arabs are defeated at Samanud. Those of Lower Egypt who oppose collaboration attack those in favour, and make themselves feared. 'Amr's foray into the eastern Delta is unsuccessful. As to his men, the Arabs or 'Ishmaelites' were the nucleus, but all may not have been foreigners. As in Syria and Iraq, there may have been Arabs of a kind already in or on the borders of the Nile Valley. In the first century BC,



62 Egypt, from the seventh to the ninth centuries.

Strabo had called the east bank of the river 'Arabia',[1] and told how camel merchants brought goods from the Red Sea to Koptos in Upper Egypt.[2] 'Amr himself is said, however apocryphally, to have become familiar with the country as a merchant in the days before he joined the Prophet. At the same time it is possible that with the Ishmaelites had come recruits of miscellaneous origin, whose numbers increased as local men came forward.

The matter was resolved when the Byzantines withdrew on the instructions of Constantinople,[3] and the Coptic Duke Sanutius (Shenute) took what may have been a personal decision to place the Egyptian fleet at the disposal of 'Amr in return for favour shown to the Jacobite Church.[4] The Byzantines returned in 645 to recapture Alexandria, but were driven out in the following year. Meanwhile the fleet assisted in the conquest of Cyrenaica, and the Patriarch Benjamin came out of hiding to be reinstated as the rightful successor of St Mark. His Church was made official, and came into full possession of ecclesiastical property in Egypt, which it held on the basis of the Roman law of *piae causae*. Titles to this effect were probably the subject of privileges granted from the beginning by the new regime,[5] along with tax exemptions. In return it may be supposed that the Coptic Church helped to ensure that the Arabs took over the country and its administration quickly and smoothly. The initial levies of food and clothing were abandoned. The Coptic population was classified as *dhimmī*, 'protected', in token of which a poll-tax was imposed on adult males. The basic taxes remained the same, notably the taxes in kind, which were levied in accordance with a periodic assessment of what the land would bear, and the labour services required for public works. The distinction in the sources between land taken *'anwatan*, 'by force', and land taken *'ahdan*, 'by compact', reflects the distinction between domain land, confiscated from the Byzantine state and the Byzantine nobility, and land under the district administration, the pagarchy. On domain land, taxes were levied directly from individual occupants; elsewhere they were levied for the most part through a village quota.

[1] *The geography of Strabo*, ed. and trans. by H. L. Jones (London and Cambridge, Mass., revised reprint, 1935), VIII, 71, 85, 135.

[2] Ibid. 119–21.

[3] Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine state*, trans. by J. Hussey (Oxford, 1956), 101–3.

[4] Cf. R. G. Goodchild, 'Byzantines, Berbers and Arabs in 7th century Libya', *Antiquity*, 1967, 41, 115–24.

[5] For examples from the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD, cf. S. M. Stern, *Fāṭimid decrees* (London, 1964).

The new dispensation was a movement away from the power of the landlord towards control by a central government. Whereas in the sixth century the great estates of the Byzantine aristocracy had been *autopracts*, self-governing territories which had provided their owners with the wealth and influence to dominate the state officials in the localities,[1] the flight of the proprietors opened the way to stronger direction from above. The authority of the pagarchs, the district governors, was increased; at the same time they were required to make regular visits to the capital. It was a movement, however, which stayed well within the old bounds of government in Egypt. These were fundamentally determined by the economy. Egypt's dependence upon the Nile is a commonplace, but the problems of agriculture have varied from the narrow valley of Upper Egypt, the Ṣa'īd, to the marshy coast of the Delta. The old system of basin irrigation – the controlled flooding of the countryside – was straightforward in the southern part of the valley, required the building of canals in the more northerly section and in the southern part of the Delta, and was scarcely practicable nearer to the sea. To build and maintain the dykes, canals, wells and ditches which were needed throughout the year, and especially to organize the collective effort required to manage the flood, local initiative at a village or at most a district level was necessary but sufficient. Until the introduction in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of a system of dams and barrages requiring unified control of the river below Aswan, there was no basic economic need for a central government, an 'hydraulic despotism' whose management was essential to production. While the state may have been able to provide a measure of co-ordination, it was never able to overcome the problem of recurrent famine; its economic policy was more designed to feed the capital and maintain the level of exports, and its other activities might be responsible for long periods of depression. Revenue was the overriding consideration, and the principal purpose of centralization. In practice, the state rarely possessed an administration of sufficient competence to supervise the entire country, and it tended to delegate its authority to men on the spot.

The Romans had relied extensively on tax-farmers to organize production and guarantee the yield. The Byzantine aristocracy had carried the process a step further in the direction of the autonomous

[1] Cf. briefly H. I. Bell, 'Egypt and the Byzantine empire', in *The legacy of Egypt*, 1st edn, ed. by S. R. K. Glanville (Oxford, 1942), 332–47; C. Préaux, 'Graeco-Roman Egypt', in ibid., 2nd edn, ed. by J. R. Harris (Oxford, 1971), esp. 347–52.

local magnate. With the coming of the Arabs, the balance was not so much redressed as refined. The departure of the Byzantines meant that native Egyptians, who already provided the administration with the bulk of its personnel, came to hold all but the highest 'ministerial' posts. The pagarchs were drawn from a class of property owners who appear in the papyri from Aphrodito in Upper Egypt under the name of *proteuontes*. These formed a separate group, along with the city and the villages, as one of the three constituents of the pagarchy, the unit of administration. Partly no doubt because of the disappearance of the Greeks, by the end of the seventh century AD some of them seem to have been very rich indeed. The pagarchs themselves, in their official capacity, enjoyed considerable discretion despite the supervision to which they were subjected. As might be expected, they were closely connected with the Church, which seems to have been able to depend upon the Faithful to make good any losses caused by the occasional exactions of the Arabs. Christians in fact understood each other's problems very well, and the charity extended to both rich and poor may well have amounted to a conspiracy to live their lives under the Arabs with the least possible interference. Their behaviour, which amounted to a substantial degree of independence, could perhaps have been summed up in Severus's theme, valid at the time of composition in the tenth century, of patient acceptance of whatever the Lord might send by way of infidel rule.

The Arabs themselves made their capital at Babylon, the fortress commanding the junction of the Nile Valley and the Delta. Outside the castle they made a camp which became a *miṣr* (pl. *amṣār*), a 'garrison city', called Fusṭāṭ (Latin *fossa*, Greek *phossaton*, 'trenches'; Arabic 'tent') or, simply, Miṣr, an old name for Egypt which happened to be the same as the common noun, of Syriac origin, for a foundation of this kind. It was centred on what became the Mosque of 'Amr, the house of the commander and place of assembly. Beginning as a tented camp, it rapidly acquired more permanent buildings, and like Roman legionary foundations such as Chester or York, and Lambaesis in Roman Africa, it developed a civilian character. This should not obscure the original military nature of the settlement, or of its first inhabitants. They were called by one or more of a cluster of terms hinging on the notion of trust, submission, agreement and protection. From *amn* or *amān*, 'safety', 'peace', comes *īmān*, 'entering safety', 'faith', and *mu'min*, 'faithful'. From *salm* or *salām*, 'peace', comes *islām*, 'acceptance of peace', 'submission', and *muslim*, 'one who submits'. With these went *bay'a*,

'homage'; *dhimma*, 'protection'; *'ahd*, 'agreement'; and *ṣulḥ*, 'peace'. All these terms have acquired a specifically, sometimes exclusively, religious meaning, stemming ultimately from the strong biblical notion of covenant. But whatever their religious connotation may have been in the seventh century, all of them translated the relevant Latin terms of Roman law, especially as this was being modified in practice by the late classical and early medieval trend towards personal allegiance. It was at least as much a question of fidelity and obedience to human masters. *Mu'min*, the term contained in the principal title of the new monarch, *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* ('Commander of the Faithful'), seems to have been originally reserved for the first adherents to the cause, the Arabs. *Muslim* may have been interchangeable with *dhimmī*, the term eventually applied to Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian subjects, and designated non-Arabs of inferior status before becoming the chief word for a believer.

In Egypt itself, the papyri distinguish between the *moagaritai* and *mauloi*, that is, *muhājirūn* and *mawālī*. *Muhājirūn* is a term connected with the name of 'Hagarenes', sons of Hagar or Ishmaelites, by which the Arabs were known. Specifically, however, it meant 'emigrants', those who had made a *hijra* ('hegira') or exodus. The term was subsequently restricted to those who had made the Hijra – that is, to those who had accompanied Muḥammad in his flight from Mecca to Medina in AD 622, which was taken as the beginning of the Muslim era. But in this context it referred to those Arabs who had 'emigrated' out of the wilderness into the armies of the *amṣār*, the garrison cities, for the sake of the cause. It was thus a term like *mu'minūn*, distinguishing Arabs who had committed themselves in this way from those who had not. Originally this *hijra* must have been encouraged as well as desired, and the *muhājirūn* must have been all the Arabs who came to Egypt, where they formed a nomadic horde based on Fusṭāṭ, but migrating up and down the eastern side of the Delta. From the end of the seventh century, however, the *muhājirūn* were enrolled in tribal regiments on a register, *dīwān* (pl. *dawāwīn*), which was used to limit the size of the force. *Hijra* then became a kind of enlistment which could be denied to most of the beduin, the 'people of the countryside'.[1]

The history of the *muhājirūn* is echoed and corroborated by that of the *mawālī* (sing. *mawlā*), 'clients'. *Walā'*, the client-patron relationship,

[1] For *hijra* in this sense cf. H. A. R. Gibb, 'The fiscal Rescript of 'Umar II', *Arabica*, 1955, 2, 1, 1–16. The Rescript purports to be a general directive of the early eighth century, but may well have been composed in Egypt in the ninth, with reference at this point to the final exclusion of the Arabs from the *dīwān* in 834.

which included the relationship of a freedman to his former owner, may have been known in Arabia before the conquests, although not under this name, which originally meant 'friendship'. As defined after the conquests, however, it corresponded to a relationship of very long standing in the Mediterranean world, where it was governed by Roman law. In the early community of the Faithful it was associated with *islām*, 'submission', in the procedure of *muwālāt*, which entailed the creation of *walā'* between the new *muslim* and the one who received his 'submission'.[1] By 800 the procedure was defunct, but the early association of *islām* with *walā'* may be compared with the association of *hijra* with membership of the community in the case of the Arabs, as a means of entry into the *amṣār* by those of largely non-Arab origin. These became *muslimūn*, 'Muslims', as they were affiliated to a patron and took his tribal name. To judge from the *Chronicle* of John, this recruitment at first was voluntary, as individuals joined the invaders. Later it became more regular, as the Arabs endeavoured to maintain their strength over a wider and wider area, and more selective; the Qibṭ or Copts, the native Egyptians, were excluded, and more reliance was placed upon slaves who were freed by this initiation. Like the *muhājirūn*, the *mawālī* were organized into tribal regiments; one 'Abd al-Raḥmān was rewarded with the command of his fellow *mawālī*, clients of the Arab tribe Tujīb, for his valour in killing the rival caliph, Ibn al-Zubayr, at Mecca in 692. But others were employed in garrison duties, specifically to guard the mouths of the Nile. In 673 Wardān, *mawlā* of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, was killed in a Byzantine raid on Burullus. About 720 a body of *mawālī* perished during a similar raid on Tinnis, while in 750 the *mawlā* in command of the *mawālī* at Alexandria was killed in revolt against Marwān II. In this capacity the *mawālī* were associated with the native Christians who were called up for military duties as one of the liturgies or labour services they were required to provide. These were called *machimoi*, 'fighters', rendered into Arabic as *maqāmiṣa*,[2] and were especially responsible for manning the fleet.

By no means all *mawālī*, however, were government troops, or even *muslimūn* in any religious sense. The client, like the slave, was a familiar figure. It was natural that the Arabs, the new rulers, should acquire both as personal attendants. Many would have been the slaves or clients of lesser men. With little standing and no public function,

[1] J. Schacht, *The origins of Muhammadan jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1950; corrected reprint, 1953), 161, 173.

[2] M. A. Shaban, *Islamic history*, AD 600–750 (Cambridge, 1971), 157–8.

they would have been the nucleus of a civilian population in the garrison cities. No doubt the majority counted themselves as *muslimūn* out of loyalty to their owners and patrons, but some may have remained, for example, Christian. So with the slaves and clients of the great. About 700 the *ghulām* or slave Talīd was appointed governor of Barce (Barca) by his master ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the governor of Egypt. People complained that he was a slave, and therefore he was freed to become a *mawlā*; the question of religion does not come into the issue. Talīd is more important as an example of the way in which the household retinues of the leaders of the community were growing in size and importance. Slaves ranged from domestics to young men of trust, *ghilmān* (sing. *ghulām*), or *fityān* (sing. *fatā*), 'pages', who escorted their master and grew up to provide him with loyal aides. Emancipated like the *ghilmān* of Muḥammad b. Yazīd, who brought him news in prison of the death of his successor as governor of the Maghrib, they became his *mawālī* along with many others. Some might form a whole personal regiment following their patron into battle; they moved into and out of the regular army. During the warfare of the 740s, for example, Ḥafṣ b. al-Walīd constituted a following called the Ḥafṣiya out of the *mawālī* and the *maqāmiṣa*, and ʿAmr b. al-Waḍḍāḥ led a troop of the Waḍḍāḥiya into Egypt, while Zabbān b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz led the *mawālī* of the family to the defeat of the rebel Thābit. Many of these had probably commended themselves to their patron in accordance with the common practice of the ancient and early medieval world. Some may have been Arabs, even men of good birth, who like members of the native aristocracy accepted *walā'* for the sake of advancement. To judge from practice further west, Peter, governor of Upper Egypt, and his brother Theodore, who were obliged to become *muslim* by al-Aṣbagh, son of the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, about 704/5, are likely to have become his personal clients. All might aspire to power, wealth and ennoblement as they assisted their lord in his career, for the retinue and the clientele was the key to success, the means to occupy positions of importance with men of trust.

In this way the aristocracy itself grew in size. Its nucleus consisted of the leading Arab families, who owed their supremacy to the conquests and to the government of a growing empire. The rise of this aristocracy was summed up in the career of the Banū Umayya. The empire had been created by ʿUmar, 634–44, under whom Syria, Iraq and Egypt were won. The Byzantine empire survived, but the Persian empire was destroyed, and the Arabs went on to annex Iran. Egypt, which had been

conquered by ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, was given to ʿAbd Allah b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ, a relative of ʿUmar's successor ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān is said to have favoured his family, the Banū Umayya, provoking a rebellion in which he was murdered in 656. His successor ʿAlī was challenged by Muʿāwiya, the Umayyad governor of Syria, who in 661 became the first ruler of the Umayyad Dynasty. After a period of civil war from 683 to 693, the hegemony of the family was restored by ʿAbd al-Malik, 685–705, who appointed his brother ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz governor of Egypt for an unparalleled period of twenty years. The sons of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz remained wealthy and powerful while his successors in office came and went. His rule in Egypt, like the reign of his brother at Damascus, was the beginning of a change in the character of government away from that of the *miṣr*, the garrison city, to that of the royal court. While the central buildings at Fusṭāṭ were reconstructed as the Mosque of ʿAmr for mainly religious purposes, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz built for himself a new palace, the Dār al-Mudhahhab, the 'Golden Hall'. He went on to build outside the city at Helwan a residence which became a summer capital where the district governors were each required to build a house, and the patriarch himself built a church, since he too was required to make regular visits from Alexandria. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz may have hoped to succeed his brother as Amīr al-Mu'minīn, but he died in the same year, 705.

THE ADVANCE INTO THE MAGHRIB

The necessary background to these developments in Egypt was provided by the lands to the west and south. Cyrenaica had been conquered by 645; as in the case of Egypt, the Byzantine capital of Apollonia or Sozusa on the coast was abandoned in favour of Barce, an inland site on the first terrace of the Jebel Akhdar, opposite the last Byzantine stronghold of Tokra. In 652 ʿAbd Allah b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ is credited with an expedition as far as the Nubian capital of Dongola, and the conclusion of a treaty called the *baqṭ* providing basically for the exchange of corn for slaves. *Baqṭ* has been derived from an ancient Egyptian *bakh*, meaning 'barter',[1] but this may depend too much upon the element of exchange in the ninth-century Arabic accounts. It is more likely to be Latin *pactum*, Greek *pakton*, suggesting that a long-standing relationship going back to Roman times was endorsed and continued by the Arabs. Over the next twenty years or so, raids against

[1] Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn (Leiden and London, 1954—), under *baḳt*. For a text of this *baqṭ*, see ch. 9, pp. 566–7.

Tripoli and Byzantine Africa are attributed to Mu'āwiya b. Ḥudayj, and it may be about this time that the Arabs first entered the Fezzan.

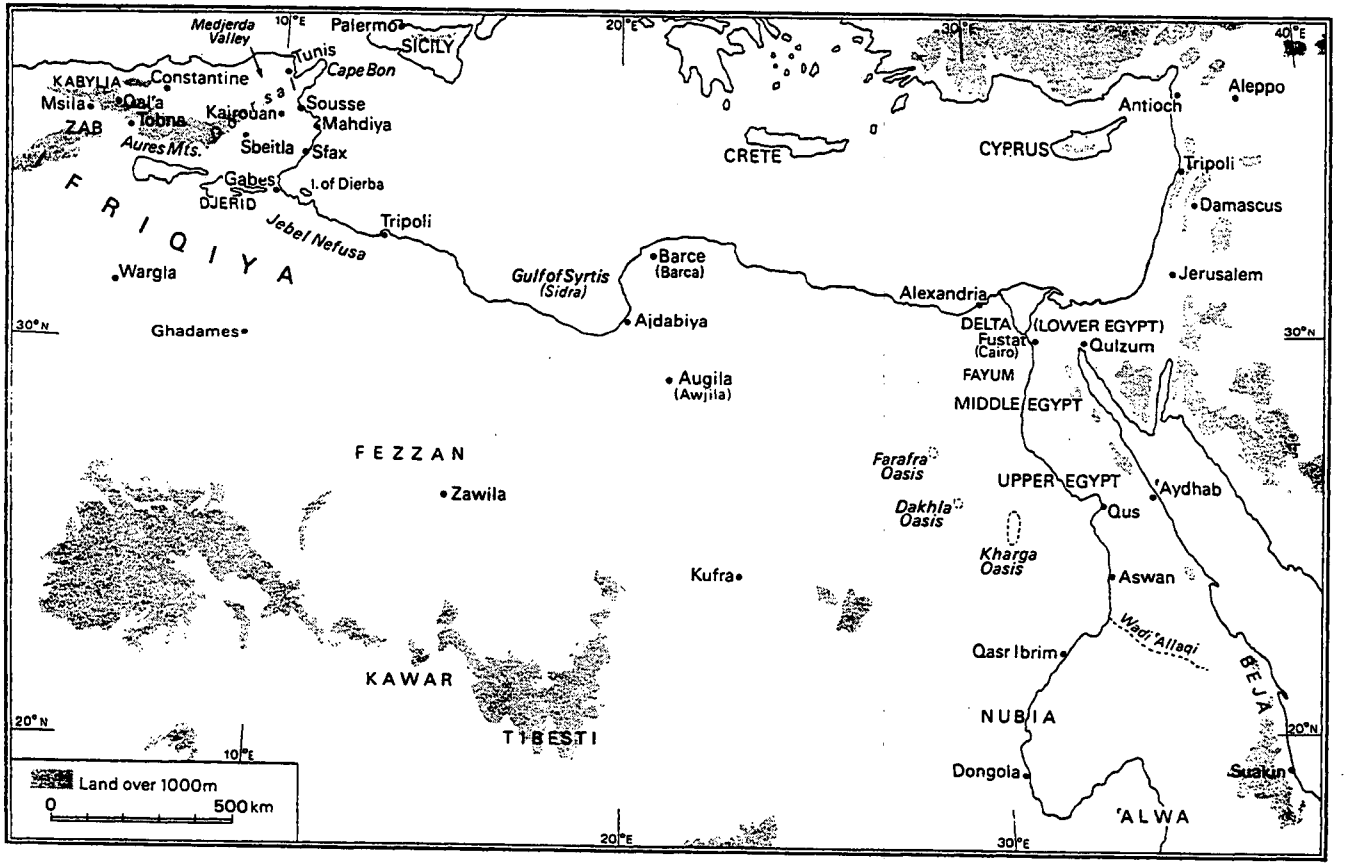
Cyrenaica, Nubia and the Fezzan all have similar tales told about them in the ninth-century sources. In these accounts, the people of Barce submitted willingly to 'Amr, who made peace with them; thereafter they paid their tribute by themselves, without the need for a tax-collector. The Berber people called the Lawāta, however, rebelled, and as a punishment it was specified that they might sell their children to pay what they owed. In the case of the Fezzan, the inhabitants submitted to 'Amr and made an agreement which they then broke. This agreement was restored by 'Uqba b. Nāfi' on his way west in 666/7, on condition that 360 'heads' were sent every year as tribute. In the case of Nubia, the *baqt*, the agreement concluded by 'Abd Allah, included the same stipulation of 360 'heads' a year because once again the Nubians had broken an initial agreement with 'Amr. To this number, a further forty were said to have been added as a present, while the Arabs undertook to supply commodities such as grain in exchange.

All three stories are fictions; with their common theme, they are the product of Muslim jurisprudence, which by the ninth century had concluded that it was illegal to enslave peoples who had entered into a pact of any kind with the Muslims. This was a logical deduction from a view of the world in which the peoples were arranged in order below the Muslims at the top of the scale, down through Christians, Jews and Persians to unbelievers. A second scale described the actual relations of the Muslim community with other peoples as these had been established at the time of the conquests, ranging from domination through various less comprehensive states of peace to actual or potential war. This went with yet a third, which turned on the opposition of Islam and slavery as two extremes of the human condition; no Muslim could become a slave (even though a slave might become a Muslim), nor might any of those who were protected by Islam as partners to any kind of agreement. Slavery could only arise by birth, or by the capture of someone in a state of war, a non-Muslim to whom Islam was under no obligation. These scales had been derived from Roman law.[1] Applied to Egypt, they may have reflected the relations of Byzantium with the neighbouring lands. The three accounts have to be seen as an attempt to justify an infringement of the scheme, the taking of slaves from peoples who should have been exempt. The anomaly is explained as a justifiable punishment.

[1] For the element of Roman law, cf. P. Crone, 'The Mawālī in the Umayyad period', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1973).

The slave-trade in question was probably very old, but was greatly promoted by the Arab conquests. Large numbers of captives were taken in wars and raids, and their allocation as part of the booty was a major preoccupation. From what happened still further west, it is clear that human tributes were then required, partly to meet the demand for female slaves, but also to keep up the numbers of *mawālī*. The recruitment of the Qibṭ, the native Copts, was prohibited either by voluntary enlistment or through enslavement; the regime preferred to keep them as tax-paying subjects for fiscal purposes. When in 744 *islām* was briefly encouraged by the exemption of the new *muslim* from the poll-tax, this was an opportunity to become a soldier. It was clearly exceptional. *Mawālī* may have been sent as reinforcements from the east. Some were probably obtained by the slave-trade from Nubia. The majority, however, were drawn by this means from the Barbar, the Berbers of the Libyan area and beyond, whose conquest proved indispensable as well as profitable.

Around the Gulf of Syrtis (Sidra) the desert reaches the sea, forming a natural frontier between Barce and Tripoli. Tripoli was a part of Byzantine Africa, with its capital at Carthage, covering this stretch of the Libyan coast, Tunisia and eastern Algeria. Once again, the initial conquest of Tripoli is attributed to ʿAmr. About 647/8 ʿAbd Allah is said to have advanced into the heart of the Byzantine province to slay the exarch Gregory, in revolt against Constantinople, in an epic encounter at Sufetula (Sbeitla) in Tunisia. Subsequent expeditions are associated with Muʿāwiya b. Ḥudayj. It is perhaps acceptable to date the first attempt at occupation to about 670 with the establishment of a *miṣr* or *qayrawān* (a 'caravan' or halt) on the edge of the steppe about 130 km south of Carthage, from which the Byzantines exercised an uncertain authority. The purpose may have been to capture the port as part of the Arab attack upon Constantinople which occupied the decade. The site chosen by the founder, ʿUqba b. Nāfiʿ, was at the foot of the Tunisian Dorsal, the range which runs from the Aures mountains in the south-west towards Cape Bon in the north-east, and separates the lower and drier lands around the Gulf of Gabes from the higher and wetter country of the Medjerda valley and the Constantinois. The new city of Kairouan (i.e. Qayrawān) would, however, have been abandoned in the 680s during the civil wars which unsettled the Umayyads at this time, when the invaders seem to have fallen back on Tripoli and Barce. The successful attempt at conquest came in the 690s after ʿAbd al-Malik had restored the authority of the dynasty in the east. Carthage was then



63 Egypt, Nubia and Ifriqiya, from the seventh to the ninth centuries.

taken, destroyed and rebuilt as Tunis. By 705 Ḥasan b. al-Nu'mān had converted the former Byzantine territory into a new province with the same name, Ifrīqiya.

The result testifies to the Byzantine achievement. Although the power of Carthage had been doubtful for fifty years, the area it had once controlled survived as an administrative unit. How it came to do so is obscure, but the explanation is probably to be found in the opposition which the Arabs encountered from native princes who saw themselves as the true heirs of Rome. The names we have are Kasīla (Kusayla), who would seem to have killed 'Uqba b. Nāfi' about 683 and to have ruled the country from Kairouan, and the Kāhina, 'the Prophetess', who ten years later would seem to have repelled the Arabs yet again before her final defeat and death. The one would have been for the time a *muslim* ally, the other perhaps a Jewish queen. In one account, however, Kasīla becomes the son of the Kāhina, whose Arabic title may be simply a deformation of a proper name Kahyā (Dahyā).[1] The argument for her Judaism is weak, and if Kāhina is indeed a deformation, 'she' may have been a man. The earliest extant Maghribī source, the *Riyāḍ al-Nufūs* of al-Mālikī in the eleventh century, would suggest that the Kāhina was a Christian. All sources make a connection between the two personages and the Rūm, the Byzantines, and it is likely that, whoever they were, they helped maintain the Byzantine tradition until the Arabs were strong enough to win the succession for themselves.

This conclusion is supported by the archaeological evidence, which points to a continuity of occupation of urban sites from the late Roman, Christian period into the early Muslim period. At Belalis Major in north-western Tunisia there was first a forum, then a Christian church built and rebuilt some distance away while the forum was given over to housing. An Arabic coin of the early eighth century has been found in the base of the rectangular fort which was erected on the site of this church probably towards the end of the century.[2] At the beginning of their effective occupation, the Arabs seem to have encountered a population whose ways were those of the Byzantine world. Beyond this, however, the deficiences of the literary sources make this population difficult to perceive.

The term Ifrīqī (pl. Afāriq or Afāriqa), 'African', evidently derived

[1] Cf. H. Z. Hirschberg, 'The Berber heroine known as the Kāhina' (in Hebrew), *Tarbiẓ*, 1957, 26, 4, 370–83.

[2] A preliminary account of the excavation by A. Mahjoubi is in the *Actes* of the Premier Congrès d'Histoire et de Civilisation du Maghreb, Tunis, Dec. 1974.

from the toponym Ifrīqiya, 'Africa', which the Arabs took from the Latin, is used by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam for the inhabitants of the country, as Qibṭ, 'Copt', is at first a word for the native Egyptian. The plural form Afāriq, Afāriqa, then evolves, like Qibṭ, as the name of a community. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam specifies that after his victory over the Kāhina, Ḥasan b. al-Nu'mān organized the government of Ifrīqiya, imposing regular taxes upon the *'ajam* and such of the Barbar as were, like the *'ajam*, Christian. As in Egypt, religion is the criterion, although the terms are racial and linguistic. Barbar is the expression for most of the inhabitants of the lands west of Egypt; *'ajam*, the other term used, means non-Arab in the sense of non-Arabic-speaking. A little later in the ninth century, al-Ya'qūbī makes the same distinction.[1] Elsewhere, however, he uses *'ajam* more generally to embrace the Barbar, the Afāriq and the Rūm.[2] The Rūm should properly be Greeks, lingering on perhaps after the conquest; the Barbar remain as before. The Afāriq, on the other hand, have clearly become something less than the inhabitants of Ifrīqiya. In the tenth century, al-Muqaddasī lists alongside Arabic and Berber a language resembling 'the Rūmī', most plausibly Latin, which was used for inscriptions down to the eleventh century. From this, following Georges Marçais, it may be conjectured that the Afāriq were specifically the Latins of the Byzantine period, surviving as a church. Beside them, the Jews were probably represented by numerous self-contained communities.

The Barbar present a different problem. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam they were a race; their language was recognized by Ibn al-Kalbī in Iraq about 800. They are divided by Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam into two groups, the Barānis and the Butr, when dealing with the period 675–725; thereafter, when events fall within the lifetime of 'Uthmān b. Ṣāliḥ, his principal source, these terms are replaced by names of individual peoples. When they reappear, notably in the work of the fourteenth-century Ibn Khaldūn, it is in genealogical guise as the descendents of the eponymous Barnis and al-Abtar, sons of a founding-father Barr. The genealogies appear to be an invention, the product perhaps of a literary genre which sought to establish the claim to fame of each nation within Islam. They need not testify to any profound ethnographic distinction, despite the attempt of E.-F. Gautier to identify the two groups as sedentaries and nomads in perpetual com-

[1] al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. by M. de Goeje (Leiden, 1892), 347; French trans. by G. Wiet, *Le Livre des pays* (Cairo, 1937), 208.

[2] Ibid. 350/trans. 212.

petition with each other.[1] William Marçais suggested a reference to dress, *barānis* being the plural of *burnus*, 'burnous', *abtar* meaning 'cut short'.[2] All that appears from Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam is firstly a religious distinction; the Barbar who were Christian like the *'ajam* were mostly *Barānis*. Al-Kindī in fact uses the term in an Egyptian context to refer to Christians; when Arabic was introduced in place of Greek for the *dawāwīn*, 'the registers', 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-'Azīz dismissed one Ashnās from the Dīwān, 'the Ministry', and forbade anyone of the *barānis* (to belong? to join? to serve?). Ashnās or Anītās is referred to previously as a man in charge of money. It may be relevant that *burnus* is the Arabic for the garment of a Coptic priest. More to the point, the term Barānis when first used in Ifrīqiya would seem to have been of foreign origin.

It is all the less clear. For the fourteenth century Ibn 'Idhārī, Kasīla is al-Burnusī, while the Kāhina is of the Butr, Christian or otherwise. The Butr have a different claim to fame as the people, according to Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, upon whom the Arabs relied to the exclusion of the Barānis for their military recruits. While this may once again reflect the Christian character of the Barānis, it means that the Butr appear in the first instance as *mawālī*. They lead straight back to the business of the human tribute from the lands to the west of Egypt. According to Ibn 'Idhārī, the Barbar supplied troops in return for *amān*, 'safe conduct', extended to *ṭā'a*, 'obedience', and finally *islām*, 'submission'. Subsequently some at least are described as *raḥā'in*, 'hostages'.

Ibn 'Idhārī is late, and his terminology may be suspect, but this element of formal agreement in return for the provision of human beings is so close to the theme of the stories of Nubia, Cyrenaica and the Fezzan, that these accounts may be considered to be, at some considerable remove, tales of the same kind. Recruitment to an Ifrīqiyan force would simply mean the extension of the process further west with the foundation of the new *miṣr* of Kairouan. *Mawālī* of local origin are first mentioned in the withdrawal to Tripoli about 684. Then come the specific references to the Butr in the service of Ḥasan b. al-Nu'mān, expanded by the mention of *mawālī* in the service of the aristocracy. Of these the most famous is Ṭāriq b. Ziyād, the conqueror of Spain, *mawlā* of Ḥasan's successor Mūsā b. Nuṣayr. Among these *mawālī* were members of the native nobility who associated themselves in this way with the new rulers. In Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's story, the two

[1] E.-F. Gautier, *Le Passé de l'Afrique du Nord: les siècles obscurs* (Paris, 1952), 215–80.
[2] Ibid. 241.

sons of the Kāhina submit to Ḥasan and are rewarded with high command. Indeed, the whole purpose of her prophetic power is to foretell a great future for them with the victorious Arabs. The tale may well be a fragment from the legend of some notable *mawlā*, perhaps that of Ṭāriq himself. Although nothing more is heard of the sons of the Kāhina, the force of Butr placed under the command of the elder becomes a force of 12,000 to which were allocated Arab teachers of the Koran, and ends up – wrongly, in the opinion of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam – under the command of Ṭāriq at Tangier. A little later, in a second cluster of stories, the Butr are the Barbar who are the *mawālī* of the dead Mūsā b. Nuṣayr. In 720 they kill the new governor, Yazīd b. Abī Muslim, when he proposes to turn them into his *ḥaras*, or guard.

The scheme of the new province thus appears somewhat different from that of Egypt. Apart from the Christian Afāriq, liable like the Qibṭ of Egypt to regular taxation in return for *dhimma*, 'protection', *islām* seems to have been employed as an instrument of government. Of Ḥasan b. al-Nuʿmān, Ibn ʿIdhārī says that he returned to Kairouan *baʿda mā ḥasuna islām al-Barbar*, 'after the *islām* of the Barbar had been made good'. By this may be understood a situation in which Berber peoples and their leaders had elected, or had been compelled, to acknowledge Arab overlordship. This meant the supply of recruits to the armies; more generally, it meant the fealty of the peoples from whom the recruits were drawn. Their leaders entered the clienteles of Arab leaders; they probably supplied contingents as well as recruits for Arab expeditions. A wide periphery of 'allies' came into being, of peoples who had made their *islām*, their 'submission', in little more than a political sense, just as many of them had become Christian as part of an alliance with Byzantium. They were in contrast to the *kuffār*, the 'unbelievers' beyond the Muslim pale, the peoples on the horizon of the conquest as it advanced along a line through Barce and Tripoli to Kairouan, then on towards the Maghrib al-Aqṣā, 'the furthest west'.

The conquest continued to be led by the Egyptian aristocracy. Although, after its creation by Ḥasan b. al-Nuʿmān, Ifrīqiya became independent of the governor of Egypt, Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, who was appointed Ḥasan's successor in 705, was *mawlā* to the great ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and his family, like that of ʿUqba b. Nāfiʿ, flourished in both countries. With their slaves and clients, they were well placed to be the agents of further expansion. With the dynasty secure, the new caliph Walīd (705–15) undertook the conquest of Khurasan in the far north-east. The capture of Carthage had opened the western Mediterranean to

Arab piracy. From Kairouan Mūsā envisaged the conquest of the lands beyond the Byzantine frontier, the old Roman Mauretanias and Visigothic Spain. The execution was rapid, complete within ten years, a brevity in contrast to the time taken to occupy Ifrīqiya. Gautier thought this was because the nomads, whom he identified with the Butr, had passed from hostility to alliance. It is necessary rather to think of an Ifrīqiyan army, with an increasing Berber component, which advanced along and garrisoned a route through Tlemcen to Ṭinja (Tangier). At Tangier, where he was installed by Mūsā in 710, the *mawlā* commander Ṭāriq b. Ziyād was close to Ṣibta (Septem, Ceuta), ruled by a count known to the Arabs as Julian, whose predecessors had been Byzantine governors. Ṣibta was a focal point for a region on either side of the Straits of Gibraltar, and it was with help from the count that Ṭāriq crossed into Spain in 711 to inflict a total defeat upon Roderic, the Visigothic king. Rapidly exploited by Ṭāriq and by Mūsā, this victory brought most of Spain within a vast dominion ruled from Kairouan. The governor of Ifrīqiya had become the governor of the Maghrib, 'the West', a comprehensive term which only later came to refer more narrowly to the Atlas region.

THE FALL OF THE UMAYYADS

Mūsā celebrated his triumph with his return to Damascus with unheard-of booty in 715. It was a high point of Umayyad history, just before the failure of the great siege of Constantinople in 717–18 which should have been the climax. Thereafter the vast empire became perplexed with administrative problems. The magnificence of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in Egypt had been deliberate. In Damascus his brother ʿAbd al-Malik had proclaimed the royal character of his authority by usurping the privileges of the Byzantine emperor. A new gold coinage had been struck, Arabic had been introduced into official documents, and mosques built to rival the finest churches. At the same time, administrative difficulties made their appearance. In the empire at large, these are associated with the name of al-Ḥajjāj, the governor of Iraq. In Egypt they were first marked by the imposition of a poll-tax on Coptic monks by al-Aṣbagh, son of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, in 693–4. The next thirty years saw the taking of censuses, the insistence on passports and other more drastic marks of identity, and brutal attempts to recover fugitive peasants. These measures reflect a persistent flight of the peasant from the village where he was registered to escape the burdens of tax. This flight was not new.

Apart from peasants who passed themselves off as monks, obliging the authorities to penalize the Church, others migrated from district to district with the connivance of the pagarchs, who allowed them to settle without inscribing them on the tax-lists. Valuable labour was thus gained to bring more land under cultivation without any increase in the tax quota. The regime was trying to remedy what was clearly, from its point of view, an abuse.

The attempts, sporadic and ineffectual as they seem to have been for many years, were a sign of increased efficiency on the part of the government. The introduction and growing use of Arabic as a language of administration was accompanied, for example, by the development of the *dawāwīn* (registers) for the army; it may have had as a corollary the *islām* of certain high Coptic officials and the dismissal of others such as Ashīnās who remained Christian. Such zeal is unlikely to have been without cause. More revenue may have been required to meet new expenses, not least a heavy building programme. But as time went on, the government was probably struggling to prevent a fall.

In his *Beiträge*, and again in his *Islamstudien*,[1] Becker argued that this was because so many of the Copts had converted to Islam for the sake of the lighter tax, the *'ushr* or tithe, due from the Muslim. To maintain its income, the state was obliged to increase the fiscal burden on those who were left. A vicious circle was created, which was hardly broken when a distinction was made between the *jizya*, the poll-tax from which the convert was exempt, and the *kharāj*, the land-tax for which he continued to be liable. It was Dennett's aim to refute this thesis, not least because there was very little conversion before 750. What had happened was that magnates like 'Abd al-'Azīz and his sons had begun to acquire great estates, carved in the first instance out of the state domain created by the confiscation of Byzantine property at the time of the conquest. Such estates, around Alexandria and to the north and south of Fusṭāṭ, certainly paid less tax, if indeed they paid any at all. As the government looked for compensation to tighter controls over the rest of the country, it is likely that the pagarchs were prevented from harbouring fugitives to the same extent as before, and an era of comparative neglect and comparative ease came to an end. The flight of the peasantry, on the other hand, was if anything accelerated by the new severity, and aimed increasingly at the new estates, whose owners could afford to be generous. The troubles of the early

[1] C. H. Becker, *Beiträge zur Geschichte Ägyptens*, 2 vols. (Strasburg, 1902–3), II; Becker, *Islamstudien*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1924), I.

eighth century should probably be seen as symptoms of the classical syndrome of Roman Egypt as the country began to revert towards the conditions of the Byzantine period.

In 725 the reform of the administration culminated in the appointment of 'Ubayd Allah b. al-Ḥabḥāb as *'āmil* or financial controller of Egypt, an official henceforth independent of the *wālī* or governor, answering directly to Damascus for the revenue of the country. His arrival was greeted by a peasant revolt in the northern part of the Delta. This was a distinct region where basin irrigation was not practicable, and each peasant tended to have his own plot instead of an annual allotment of the flooded area. There were no estates. Conditions of tenure would have made flight within the region difficult; presumably the peasant would have found it equally hard to leave the region altogether to engage in the different kind of cultivation further south. Revolt, of which that of 725/6 was the first of a series, became one of the few remedies. On this occasion it was crushed, and under 'Ubayd Allah the government had the situation generally in hand.

But difficulties with the Copts became political when they extended to the Faithful. Arabs excluded from the army were settled in the eastern Ḥawf, the border of the desert to the east of the Delta, on terms which they disliked. They appear in al-Kindī in opposition to the *ahl al-dīwān*, 'the men of the register'. Their resentment was shared by the civilian population of Fusṭāṭ, where the community had grown out of a camp-following side by side with the Copts of Babylon. These Muslims may have felt poor and underprivileged; in 728/9 the favour shown to the Coptic Church provoked a riot which came close to rebellion. Within the professional army, jealousy was occasioned by the growing reliance of the Umayyads on Syrian Arabs. This was only an aspect of a general division into rival factions, the Qaysites and the Yemenis, the North and South Arabians, which ran throughout the empire. As they affected the aristocracy and eventually the dynasty itself, these factions made for sedition. More fundamentally, the right of the Umayyads to hold power was called in question.

The Umayyads relied upon the religion of the community, which they called *dīn* or *Dīn Allah*, 'the religion of God', to support their imperial claims. The Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, and the Great Mosque of Damascus, demonstrated the superiority of an Arabic faith and its champions. The Dome of the Rock was solemnized with inscriptions in Arabic of verses to be found in the Koran. The Great Mosque of Damascus was yet a more pointed example. Influenced by the

architecture of Constantinople, it is in the form of a three-aisled church employed for worship, not along the length of the building towards the short wall in the east, but across its width towards the long wall in the south, so that the transept has become the nave. Meanwhile, as Commanders of the Faithful, the Umayyads legislated by decree after the Roman fashion, borrowing heavily from Roman law. A special official, the *qāḍī* or judge, was appointed on behalf of the ruler to deal with cases involving members of the community. The beginning of a written Arabic literature in the first half of the eighth century, however, marked the growth of a tradition of scholarship centred on the *Dīn Allah*. In this scholarship it was coming to be affirmed that the law of the community was the custom of the community, and that this custom was not the product of continuous legislation, but had been established by Muḥammad, the founder, being handed down from generation to generation. In this sense it was coming to be equated with the religion of the community, religion in the form of a rule to be obeyed by all who believed. The right of the prince to take charge of this rule depended very much upon his acceptance as caliph (*khalīfa*, pl. *khulafā'*), the deputy and successor of Muḥammad. Acceptance of the Umayyads had never been unqualified. Now their right was challenged once again by those who saw themselves as the true heirs of the Prophet. Under Hishām (724–43) the empire as a whole remained quiet. In the Maghrib, however, the reign ended in revolt.

The west was now divided into three, the old Byzantine province of Ifrīqiya, the old Roman Mauretanias ruled from Tlemcen and Tangier, and the old Visigothic kingdom under the name of Andalus, ruled from Cordoba in the valley of the Guadalquivir, all under the governor in Kairouan. Government, however, was still largely a matter of conquest by land and sea branching out from the main line of advance from Egypt into Spain. From Ifrīqiya raids were made upon Sicily and Sardinia, from Andalus across the Pyrenees into France, and from Tlemcen down into the Sus, the border of the desert reached through the gap between the Moroccan Atlas and the Algerian plateau.[1] Here the raid of Ḥabīb b. Abī 'Ubayda, the grandson of 'Uqba b. Nāfi' and the senior commander of the armies in North Africa, which is said to have reached 'the land of the Blacks', is dated to about 736. It was for

[1] This Sus, the Sūs al-Aqṣā or 'far Sus', is to be understood as the whole of the pre-Saharan region in the west, in contrast to a Sūs al-Adnā or 'hither Sus' formed by the same region in the east (cf. Sūsa, Sousse in modern Tunisia), rather than as the subsequent Sūs al-Aqṣā, the valley of the river Sous in southern Morocco, in contrast to a Sūs al-Adnā formed, according to Ibn Abī Zar', in the fourteenth century AD, by the valley of the Sebou in the north.

such expeditions that the aristocracy, the armies and the allies were organized, going annually against the 'unsubmitted' not only on the far horizon but also in the mountains nearer at hand. Captives, with women perhaps in the majority, were taken in large numbers, and sent back as tribute to the east. The power of Kairouan, however, was probably limited to appointments and summary dismissals. In 734 'Ubayd Allah b. al-Ḥabḥāb, the *'āmil* of Egypt, was transferred to the Maghrib as *wālī* or governor, no doubt to use his talent for administration to bring the whole vast province into line with the rest of the empire. 'Ubayd Allah appointed his son Ismā'īl to Tlemcen and Tangier, and it was probably the unaccustomed strength of this family regime which brought an unstable situation to a head.

According to the *History of the patriarchs*, echoed by Ibn 'Idhārī, the Barbar of Ifrīqiya revolted against 'Ubayd Allah because he had taken the daughters of their nobles to send as presents to the caliph, and destroyed sheep to obtain Persian lambskins. The rebels, it would seem, were *muslim* allies, and it might be conjectured that they rose in defiance of an attempt to hold them to their original obligation to provide a human tribute after a period when slaves had been taken only from *kuffār*, the unbelievers who were the target of the annual raids. In his main narrative, Ibn 'Idhārī follows Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, and concentrates in the first place upon al-Murādī, the representative of 'Ubayd Allah and Ismā'īl at Tangier, whose crime is the *takhmīs al-Barbar*. In other words, according to the author of the *Bayān*, he considered the Barbar as *fay'*, booty, and liable therefore to the *khums*, the fifth of the booty accruing by law to the state, a treatment previously meted out only to those who had not accepted *islām*.

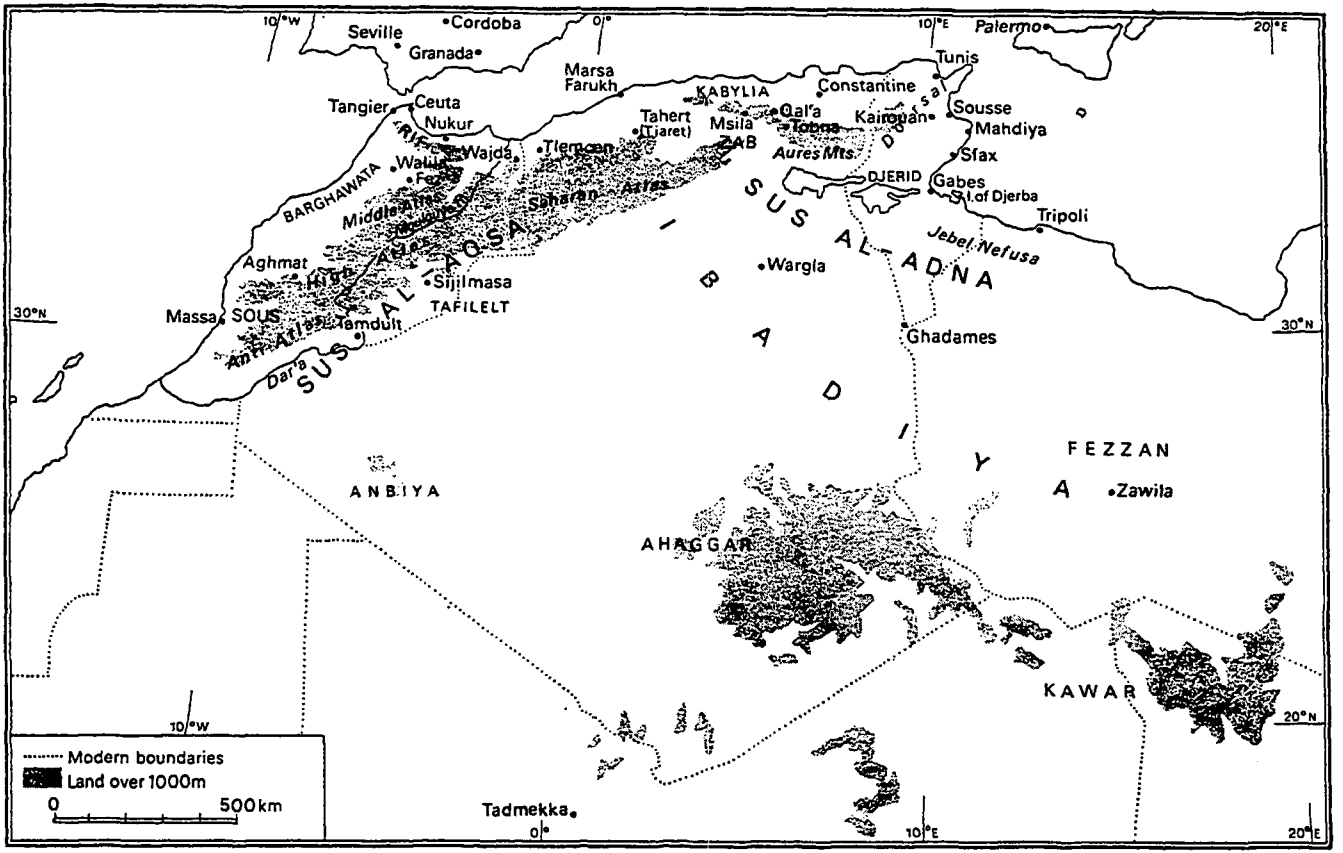
While the story makes clear that it was a question of the *muslim* Barbar, Ibn 'Idhārī's gloss is not necessarily correct; the term *takhmīs* is more specific. Speaking of the murder of the governor Yazīd b. Abī Muslim by his Berber guard about 720, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam says that the men killed him because he had made them into *akhmās* ('fifths'). Here the meaning of *akhmās* is most probably 'tribal regiments'.[1] It is likely that this episode is not unconnected with the events of 739. The stories are very similar. In both, the governor 'makes fifths'; in both, the action is unpopular, and leads to his assassination, Yazīd in 720, al-Murādī in 739. That the action was indeed the same in both cases might be inferred from the fact that two late authors, Ibn al-Athīr in

[1] Cf. H. Djaït, 'La Wilāya d'Ifriqiya au IIe–VIIIe siècle: étude institutionnelle', pt 1, *Studia Islamica*, 1967, 27, 113–14.

the thirteenth century and Ibn Khaldūn in the fourteenth, give oppressive taxation as the reason for both murders, and it could be argued that this is because the two references to fifth-making had been read alike in the sense of Ibn ʿIdhārī. More striking is the fact that in the second version of the story of Yazīd supplied by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, the Barbar in question are already the *mawālī* of the late Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, and in the story of al-Murādī, one of the rebels is given as ʿAbd al-Aʿlā b. Ḥudayj al-Ifrīqī, Rūmī (Greek) in origin, and *mawlā* of Ibn Nuṣayr. It is possible that the two stories are the same, and that we have to deal with the scattered reflections of a single event which took place at the later date.

However this may be, it would seem that the grievances of the allies were capped by those of the *mawālī*. These were not necessarily Berber, or opposed to recruitment as such. It was their personal loyalties and professional jealousies which made them susceptible to the preaching of revolutionaries. The rebels are called *khawārij* (sing. *khāriji*), literally rebels, 'those who go out'. In this way, however, they are identified with a movement going back to the seventh century. This was Kharijism. Kharijites are mentioned by al-Kindī in Egypt in 683, at the beginning of the civil war in which they were violently hostile to the Umayyads, especially in Iraq. By the eighth century they were connected not only with this tradition of dissidence, but with an argument over the status of the sinner, whom they held to have 'gone out' of the community, and to be worthy of death. Applied to the *imām* or leader of the community, such a belief was a prescription for revolt. The Kharijites, however, also known as the Mubayyiḍūn, 'the Whites', had become divided into groups, Azraqī, 'Blue', Ṣufrī, 'Yellow', and Ibāḍī, 'White' again, supposedly called after founders with these names – al-Azraq, al-Aṣfar and Ibn Ibāḍ. These groups had had various careers in Iraq, militant like the Azraqīs or quiescent like the Ibadites. During the reign of Hishām they entered a new phase as arguments over doctrine developed in conjunction with political strains on the regime. Their agitators spread out from Iraq. At a time when politics centred on personalities, their desire for a new order turned on the demand for a new ruler with the favour of God. In the Maghrib they found a situation to exploit. At Tripoli the Kharijites were Ibāḍī; further west, those initially responsible for the revolt were Sufrites.

The revolt broke out at Tangier in 739–40 under one Maysara, who proclaimed himself caliph. Maysara is called al-Midgharī or al-Maṭgharī, which would make him a Berber from the region. He is also called



64 The Maghrib in the eighth and ninth centuries.

al-faqīr, the poor or holy, *al-ḥaqīr*, 'the vile', and *al-saqqā'*, 'the water-carrier', from his alleged profession at Kairouan. 'Abd al-A'lā al-Ifrīqī appears as his deputy. After killing the governor al-Murādī, the rebels went against his chief Ismā'īl, the son of 'Ubayd Allah b. al-Ḥabḥāb, in the Sus, and killed him also. An expedition sent from Kairouan was defeated. In this *ghazwat al-ashrāf*, 'battle of the nobles', the flower of the Arab army is said to have perished, and it may be that the event was selected to mark the end of the 'good old days' of the heroes, and the beginning of an age of humbler men who could only strive to follow their example. The rebels were only partially checked when Ḥabīb b. Abī 'Ubayda, recalled from an expedition against Sicily, took charge at Tlemcen, where those who had remained loyal had gathered, seizing and mutilating its governor, whom he suspected of rebel sympathies. Maysara was deposed by his followers and murdered, and Tangier placed itself under the governor of Andalus at Cordoba, but the rebellion continued under another leader of Berber origin, Khālid b. Ḥamīd. The troops who had started the revolt were now perhaps outnumbered by *muslim* allies who had transferred their *islām*, their 'submission', to this new leader of the community.

Meanwhile the grip of 'Ubayd Allah b. al-Ḥabḥāb had been broken. In Spain the aristocracy replaced his nominee with a man of their own choice, Ibn Qaṭan. Early in 741 'Ubayd Allah was recalled, and a fresh governor, Kulthūm b. 'Iyāḍ, was sent with a fresh army from Syria. Kulthūm, however, was met by the antagonism which greeted every new governor who promoted his own men over the heads of those already in the country. When he advanced to Tlemcen, having appointed new officers at Kairouan, he is said to have quarrelled with Ḥabīb b. Abī 'Ubayda, the grandson of 'Uqba b. Nāfi' and the leader of the Ifrīqiyan aristocracy. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, the drama was consummated on the battlefield, where both Kulthūm and Ḥabīb were slain by Khālid b. Ḥamīd and his host of Barbar, 'naked, wearing only trousers', wielding slings. It continued in Andalus, whither Balj b. Bishr, the lieutenant of Kulthūm, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the son of Ḥabīb, both fled, and where they fought for power until Balj was killed. In Ifrīqiya, on the departure of Kulthūm, the regime was almost overthrown. The Sufrites appeared at Gabes in southern Tunisia under 'Ukkāsha b. Ayyūb al-Fazārī; the name may indicate a Persian origin. Maslama, left at Kairouan by Kulthūm, was defeated, while one 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Yazīd al-Hawwārī, perhaps from the Libyan area, proclaimed himself caliph at Tunis.

In the event the rebellion enjoyed only a limited success. Kairouan was saved with great difficulty in 742 by Ḥanẓala b. Ṣafwān, the governor of Egypt. The Sufrites were forced back among the Berber peoples of the Djerid, the oasis area of southern Tunisia. But when in 744 the Caliph Walīd II was murdered, Ḥanẓala was driven back to Egypt by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥabīb, great-grandson of ʿUqba b. Nāfiʿ, who returned triumphant from Andalus. Events in the Maghrib thus joined up with events in the empire at large. The murder of Walīd II was the signal for the *fitna*, the civil war which came to mark the end of the 'good old days'. The antagonisms within the community of the Faithful came to a head in six years of strife which occupied the reign of the Caliph Marwān II. Egypt was effectively held for the dynasty by the sons of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, but revolts in Palestine, Syria and Iraq kept the Umayyads from dealing either with the Maghrib or with the situation in Khurasan, where revolutionary agitation produced a still more formidable challenge. The Kharijites were not alone in the world. In the argument over the status of the sinner were others, the Murji'ites, those who left the decision to God, and the Muʿtazilites, who held that the sinner was separated. The doctrine of Murji'a, or 'postponement', was widespread in learned opinion which was potentially critical of the regime. Muʿtazila, or Iʿtizāl, 'separation', was, like Kharijism, an ambiguous term with an equally ambiguous history; it might mean 'dissidence'. The Muʿtazilites supported another group which claimed the caliphate.

This group upheld the right of descendants of the Prophet to succeed him as Commanders of the Faithful. The most obvious descendants were the offspring of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the sons of ʿAlī, the fourth caliph, by Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad. Their supporters were called the Shīʿa, 'the Party (of ʿAlī)', and there was a long history of Shiʿite revolts on behalf of pretenders from the family. Starting about 720, the appeal of these ʿAlids was exploited by a conspiracy which developed to place a member of the house of the Prophet, as yet unnamed, upon the throne. Beginning in Iraq, the conspiracy extended itself over a period of thirty years to Khurasan, where after the outbreak of the *fitna* in 744 it came into the open under the command of its local agent, Abū Muslim. By 748 the province was won, and the army of the Musawwidūn, 'the Blacks', advanced upon Iraq. In 750 Marwān II was defeated, pursued into Egypt and killed. The *dawla* or 'revolution' became the *dawla*, the state, of a new dynasty, descended, as it transpired, not from ʿAlī but from ʿAbbās, the uncle of the Prophet.

Shi'ites may have felt deceived, but the 'Abbasids put forward a sweeping claim to have been sent by God to restore the true faith of the early community before the Umayyads usurped control. Justice had returned to earth. The messianic message is conveyed by the *History of the patriarchs*, written at this point by a contemporary witness, John the Deacon, secretary to the Patriarch Michael I. The problem of being safely on the winning side had led to a number of premature revolts, and John's account shows that the Church was hard put to survive the transfer of power. In his apology, Abū Muslim comes under the sign of the Cross as a man sent from God to deliver His people, Muslim and Christian alike, from the tyrant. The Copts of the coastal marshes rebel, and, while the patriarch denounces their action, he refuses to pay an extortionate levy. He is therefore accused and grossly maltreated until God gives victory to the invaders. Thereafter there is misunderstanding; evil-minded officials cause the new governor to restore the exorbitant taxes of the old regime, while Christians are encouraged to abandon their religion. In the end, however, a happy relationship is formed. The 'Abbasid *dawla* is seen as what it claimed to be, a turning-point.

STATESMEN AND SCHOLARS

In the Maghrib, on the other hand, AD 750 was no such critical year. The 'Abbasid revolution is a mere interpolation in the text of the *Bayān*, which becomes the principal source after the ending of Ibn 'Abd Al-Ḥakam's narrative about the year 746/7. After the departure of Ḥanẓala b. Ṣafwān, 'Abd al-Raḥmān had gone on to defeat the Ibāḍī Kharijites who had gained control of Tripoli. Confirmed in his usurpation by Marwān II, he ruled Ifrīqiya as far as Tlemcen. If he recognized the new caliphs, it was not to submit and obey. In Andalus this rejection of the new order was taken still further with the arrival in 755 of the fugitive Umayyad 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dākhil, 'the immigrant', who established a completely independent regime. It was a victory for the old aristocracy and the tribal regiments whose quarrels had brought about the *fitna* on the death of Walīd II. As for the Kharijites, the success of the 'Abbasids in the east had set the seal on their failure to generate an insurrection of more than local significance in the west, but they were no less active. The factors at work in 739 continued to operate in a struggle for Kairouan. When in 755 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥabīb was murdered by his brothers, one of these, 'Abd al-Wārith, allied with the Arab troops in the capital and with the Ṣufrī Warfajjūma

people in the Djerid, against ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's son Ḥabīb. While Ḥabīb relied upon his father's followers, the coalition was founded on an appeal to a common *islām* in the name of the ʿAbbasid *dawla*. The common front was supposedly broken after its victory over Ḥabīb, when the Warfajjūma committed an atrocious massacre and installed their own leader, ʿAbd al-Malik. Fourteen months later, however, it was still in existence when in 758 ʿAbd al-Malik was himself overthrown by Abū 'l-Khaṭṭāb, the *imām* of the Ibadites of the Jebel Nefusa in Tripolitania. Abū 'l-Khaṭṭāb, who had already recaptured Tripoli, was according to tradition one of three men sent from Iraq at the invitation of the Libyans. Now he installed his colleague ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam at Kairouan, and the Kharijite ambition to gain control of Ifrīqiya was briefly realized.

Briefly, because from 759 the ʿAbbasids set out to recover the province for the empire. In 761 Abū 'l-Khaṭṭāb was killed on the borders of Cyrenaica by the governor of Egypt, Ibn al-Ashʿath, and the road to Kairouan was open. While ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam fled westwards to establish a new capital at Tahert (Tāhart or Tīhart), the old Roman Tiaret on the high plains of western Algeria some 250 km east of Tlemcen, the victors pursued the Ibadites as far as Zawila in the Fezzan. If there is anything historical about the stories of the Libyans who broke their first agreement and had to be reconquered, it is probably this. Any thought that the ʿAbbasid *dawla* was an opportunity for reconciliation was mistaken. Kairouan was fortified. But in 765 the new ʿAbbasid governor, Ibn al-Ashʿath, was driven back to Egypt by a revolt of the army. The situation which had brought about the downfall of his Umayyad predecessors had not changed; rather, the source of the malaise was becoming clear. What was resented by the troops and their commanders was the formation by each new governor – ʿUbayd Allah, Kulthūm, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, Ḥabīb, Ibn al-Ashʿath – of a *jund*, an army within an army which enjoyed special privileges in return for special loyalty. This resentment made other grievances dangerous. The erstwhile allies were opposed to regimes which repeatedly tried to subject them. The Kharijite leadership, although it had been purged from the army and relegated to the fringe of the province, continued in consequence to attract support for an alternative government. According to Ibn al-Athīr, the revolt which caused Ibn al-Ashʿath to retire was the outcome of a previous rebellion by an officer who had fallen back on the support of Ibn Rustam at Tahert.

Nevertheless it proved to be a losing battle, not only against the

superior forces of the east, but against the whole tendency of government at the time. The kind of proconsular regime which went back to the days of Mūsā b. Nuṣayr and beyond, based upon the power of patronage, was becoming more systematic with the years; a new and typical institution was in the making. The reorganization of the army was a necessary preliminary. This was begun by Ibn al-Ash'ath when he fortified Kairouan. It was continued by his successors, al-Aghlab and 'Umar b. Ḥafṣ Hazarmārd, even as they fought unsuccessfully against the troops on the one hand, the Kharijites on the other. A new command was created in the Zab, the high plains of eastern Algeria, based upon Tobna (Ṭubna), the old Roman Thubunae. After al-Aghlab was killed at Kairouan in a revolt of the army in 767, 'Umar was able to defeat an attack from the west by Ibn Rustam in alliance with Abū Qurra, the new Ṣufrī ruler of Tlemcen. Although he fell in his turn at the siege of Kairouan by the Ibadites of Tripoli under their leader Abū Ḥātim in 771, Tobna proved a refuge for his men. The arrival of Yazīd b. Ḥātim al-Muhallabī with yet another army from the east was decisive. The Ibadites were expelled. The reorganization of the army was completed. Yazīd set up three commands, one at Tobna, one at Kairouan and one at Tripoli, building a series of castles in the Byzantine manner instead of the open camps of the conquests. The army, from now on known collectively as the *jund*, was thus split up into local garrisons under local commanders. Yazīd himself controlled the centre, and was a monarch who amassed estates and a personal following large enough to ensure that his family inherited his power and position at his death in 787.

The trouble with the *jund* was only temporarily at an end, but the attempt of the Kharijites to install themselves at Kairouan was finally defeated. Troops continued to flee to Tahert, but they were refugees rather than revolutionaries. Tahert itself was exceptional. From being the seat of a government in exile, it became the capital of a monarchy in the hands of Ibn Rustam, who died between 784 and 790, and his descendants. Their power was nevertheless limited to the region of the city and the port of Marsā Farūkh, which gave them access to the Mediterranean. Only their prestige extended to the main bodies of Ibadites in the Djerid and the Jebel Nefusa. These recognized the ruler of Tahert as the *imām* or leader of their community, and might contribute to his treasury, but could not be described as subjects. They were becoming identical with the Berber peoples of the region, an ethnic group for whom the preachings of the revolutionaries were turning

into the articles of a distinct and separate faith. The government of this population was by family custom and family connection joined with the authority of the shaykhs, the 'elders' of the sect. An *imām difāʿ*, 'defence leader', might be chosen if necessary. Regulating themselves with the minimum of interference from Kairouan, the people concerned were abandoning the conflicts of the past to take advantage of the new opportunities which had been created. The movement of soldiers, slaves and tribute to and fro along the North African coast from Egypt to Spain had revived the market economy after the lapse into subsistence of the late Roman and Byzantine period. A hundred years after their brutal induction into the Arab empire, the inhabitants of the northern Sahara were not merely trading amongst themselves in livestock, crops and manufactures over a distance of 1,500 km from Tahert in the north-west to Zawila in the Fezzan in the south-east. The routes which bound together their scattered communities were often old. They had allowed the political and religious influence of Byzantium to enter the desert, and the Arabs to extract their human tribute. Now they extended on into Spain, Ifrīqiya and Egypt, supplying a demand for slaves and to a lesser extent for gold. These were drawn from regions further and further to the south.

The western Maghrib lies beyond the scope of this history, indeed, almost beyond the scope of any history at all. After his victory over Kulthūm in 742, Khālid b. Ḥamīd is not heard of again. The few indications that survive suggest that this was still an affair of the peoples affected by the conquest along the route through Tlemcen to Tangier, and down into 'the Sus'. It was in this Sus, the border of the desert reached by the gap between the Moroccan Atlas and the Algerian plateau, that Sijilmasa was reputedly founded in 757 by a band of Sufrites who amalgamated with immigrant nomads of the Miknāsa people to the north to build a city ruled by the dynasty of the Banū Midrar in the oasis region of the Tafilelt. In 765 the Sufrite Abū Qurra established himself as caliph at Tlemcen. Along the Mediterranean coast of Morocco appeared the principality of Nukūr, which shared the historical connection of Tangier with Spain. More mysterious are the references to the Muʿtazilites, encountered in the east before the ʿAbbasid revolution, but previously unknown in the Maghrib. In the ninth century, al-Yaʿqūbī speaks of the otherwise unknown city of Ayzaraj to the west of Tahert, whose Muʿtazilite inmates engage in learned dispute with their Ibadite neighbours. More to the point, it is said to have been a Muʿtazilite, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd or Abū Layla Isḥāq b.

Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, who was the leader of the Awraba of Walila, Volubilis, the capital of the old Roman Mauretania Tingitana, and still from its archaeology the second city of the region after Tangier. At Walila in 788 he received Idrīs b. ʿAbd Allah, in flight from the east. Idrīs claimed descent from Ḥasan, the elder of the two sons of ʿAlī and Fāṭima, and had shared in both of the revolts of his branch of the family in Arabia in 761–3 and 786, when he and his brothers had tried without success to wrest the caliphate from those whom they regarded as usurpers. Shiʿite propaganda may have prepared the way for his arrival in the west. Aided by Isḥāq, Idrīs took Tlemcen from Abū Qurra in 789/90, and in the same year founded as his capital the city of Fez. Any threat to the ʿAbbasids was removed when he was apparently poisoned by an ʿAbbasid emissary in 795, but his state survived in trust for his posthumous son. In spite of the lack of information, it is possible to suggest that in the region first conquered by Mūsā b. Nuṣayr, among the peoples he had conscripted, Kharijism had been largely superseded.

Events in the west thus called in question the ʿAbbasid claim to be the true government of the entire community of the Faithful. The empire had begun to break up, and the *dawla* was an important step along the way. For the ʿAbbasids this was the supreme paradox; yet they could only assist its development. The territorial limitation of their power was a symptom of something much more fundamental, the appearance of government as an institution no longer identical either with the community or with its religion. The reorganization of Ifrīqiya by Yazīd b. Ḥātim al-Muhallabī was a reflection of still more systematic measures in the east. The shift of government from the *miṣr* to the palace of the ruler, in evidence in Egypt under ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, had continued. In Syria the later Umayyads built country seats, such as Quṣayr ʿAmra and Qaṣr al-Ḥayr, from which they directed the empire. These grew in size and strength until they culminated in the immense unfinished Mshatta, 'the Winter Palace'. In 762 the ʿAbbasid ruler al-Manṣūr founded an entirely new capital city in Iraq near the site of the old imperial Persian capital of Ctesiphon, which the Arabs had destroyed at the conquest. Madīnat al-Salām, Baghdad, was a circular fortress, over 2 km across, walled and moated. An inner fortification surrounded the palace itself and the great mosque, while the outer ring was divided into wards to accommodate the army and the principal servants of the regime. The civilian city grew up outside. While Madīnat al-Salām resembled a *miṣr* in being a single self-contained settlement for the purpose of government, it was not designed for an

army and its commander so much as for a sovereign who had become an absolute monarch. Both the administration and the professional army had become an extension of his household, quartered in an extension of his residence. Everything centred on the court with its elaborate ceremony and staff, which in its turn revolved around the person of the caliph.

The great fortress was the symbol as well as the instrument of a 'new model' government which can conveniently be called *sulṭa*, 'power', 'government', or *sulṭān*, '(man of) power'. It was a technical achievement which completed the work of the Umayyads in the administration of the empire. The monarch was secluded by the diligence of the *ḥājib*, the chamberlain. Responsibility for the conduct of affairs devolved upon the vizier (*waẓīr*), an official of Persian origin who supervised the various ministries, *dawāwīn* (sing. *dīwān*). These were reformed and enlarged with salaried staff after the fashion of the old Persian empire. The change to Arabic as the language of administration was completed. The nucleus of the army was made up of the men of Khurasan. The preference shown for these soldiers from the home of the revolution continued the trend towards troops of a single origin, ethnic or regional, which had been apparent in the reliance placed by the Umayyads on the Syrian Arabs. It showed an appreciation of the fighting ability, esprit de corps and loyalty to a leader of units of this kind. The trend by no means overcame the growing reliance upon armies of retainers; rather, it gave these armies a more formal character. At Madīnat al-Salām, in the palace household of the 'Abbasid emperor, they became part of the structure of the state.

In the central provinces, the new government proved an effective method of control. The Umayyad distinction between the *wālī* or governor and the *'āmil* or financial superintendent was maintained, while a new officer, the *ṣāḥib al-barīd*, 'the master of the post office', represented a new ministry of posts and communications, reporting among other things on the loyalty and efficiency of his colleagues. Egypt was firmly held in this way. For a few years the government was located in the *mu'askar*, 'the camp', called al-'Askar, 'the Army', which was set up to the north of Fusṭāṭ as the headquarters of the first 'Abbasid governors and their troops. In 763, however, the administration returned to the city, occupying for a while the fortress of Babylon in the south-west corner. The estates of the Banū 'Abd al-'Azīz were confiscated and redistributed; the regime rewarded its supporters with land. Sporadic revolts of the peasants of the northern Delta continued

to occur, notably in 767–9. On the other hand, the government was able to deal with revolts in the army in support of Shi'ite pretenders, as in 761 in connection with the first revolt of the Ḥasanids in Arabia. The attempt of the Umayyad pretender Diḥya to revive the family interest in Upper Egypt in 785 came to nothing.

By contrast, in Ifrīqiya the government of the caliphs was a model to be copied. Yazīd b. Ḥātim al-Muhallabī ruled more in imitation of his master. In 787 his son inherited his office because, it is said, his *mawālī* would obey no one else. When the army of Ifrīqiya, the *jund*, revolted once again in opposition to this family regime, and in 794 drove the last of the Muhallabids from the country, it was not to reverse the process of formation of an independent state. Instead of fresh troops, in 795 the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd sent one of his chief lieutenants, Harthama b. A'yān, to impose a settlement. The reorganization of the province by Yazīd was carried a step further. To isolate the trouble-makers at Kairouan and Tunis, while maintaining the defence of the empire against attack from the west, Harthama appointed the most influential leader of the army in the Zab to an almost independent command. This was Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab, the son of the governor killed in 767, whose first task may have been to procure the murder of Idrīs at Fez. In 797 the scheme was complete when the Zab was constituted a separate province with Ibrāhīm as governor. But following the return of Harthama to the east, in 799 Ibrāhīm himself was called upon to intervene at Kairouan. In 800 he was recognized by Baghdad as the ruler of a reunited Ifrīqiya with plenipotentiary powers.

The *jund* in its citadels throughout the country was evidently unreliable. To meet and overcome the inevitable rebellion of its leaders, Ibrāhīm began the construction in 801 of a palace fortress 3 km to the south of Kairouan loyally named al-'Abbasiya, 'the 'Abbāsid'. To it the government was transferred when the building was finished in 810. Reproducing the concept of the 'Abbasid capital, it completed the transformation of the *wālī* or governor into a *sulṭān*, a monarch after a new fashion. Its principal occupants were members of the *ḥasham*, the retinue of the ruler, expanded and formally developed. Among those closest to the person of the prince were the *fityān* (sing. *fatā*) or *ghilmān* (sing. *ghulām*), the corps of 'young men' or 'pages' who began life as boys in the service of their master, and went on to provide his military escort and his staff of senior officers. They were purchased as slaves, like the *mawālī* of the *ḥaras* or guard. This was increased by Ibrāhīm to a force said to number 5,000. Al-Balādhurī, who gives this information

later in the ninth century, uses the term *'abīd* (sing. *'abd*) in its basic sense to mean the slaves bought by Ibrāhīm for this purpose; subsequent writers who refer to the episode use *'abīd* to mean the troops themselves. This was a general usage from the tenth century onwards. It is often taken to mean that the troops in question were Negro, but this is incorrect. When applied to soldiers it always has the sense of troops of slave origin, though technically freed. The colour is irrelevant, as when the fifteenth-century Egyptian writer al-Maqrīzī, using the synonymous *mamālīk* (sing. *mamlūk*), speaks of [*al-*] *'abīd al-mamālīk al-Atrāk*, 'the Turkish slave troops or mamluks'.[1] Essentially they were *mawālī*, normally of a single ethnic group. Those of Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab were probably *ṣaqāliba* (sing. *ṣiqlabī*), 'Slavs', Europeans, who figure at about the same time in the comparable army of the Umayyad ruler at Cordoba. Not till the end of the ninth century does the use of the term *sūdān* (sing. *aswad*), 'blacks', indicate that the slave troops recruited by Ibrāhīm II were undoubtedly Negro. It is just possible that some recruits were furnished by the Afāriq, the native Christian population.

This transformation of government under the 'Abbasids went with the development of Islam as a religion. The revolutionary fervour of the middle of the eighth century arose against a background of prayer and preaching in the place of worship. It was connected with the beginning of doctrinal argument over membership of the community which invoked the will of God rather than the will of man; and it focused on the demand for a leader who enjoyed the divine blessing. The 'Abbasid *dawla* stood for a theological achievement, of which the Round City of Madīnat al-Salām was a visible symbol. The name means 'City of Peace', the peace of God which was the ideal state of heaven and earth, the product of perfect faith. This peace had been brought into the world with the community, which was charged with its establishment on earth. At a very basic level, therefore, it was *islām*, submission to the representatives of God. Conversely, *islām*, 'acceptance of peace', was more than an undertaking between human beings. It was an act of faith in God as well as men. This was the sense which developed, so that Islam became the principal designation of the *dīn Allah*, and Muslim the chief word for a believer. By 800 any original association of *islām* with *walā'* was dead. It was a simple and direct relationship to God.

[1] al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iẓ wa 'l-I'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa 'l-āthār* [*Khiṭaṭ*], ed. by G. Wiet (Cairo, 1911), II, 46.

As to the form of this relationship, the 'Abbasids made an important contribution when they claimed to have restored the community to the perfection it must have enjoyed in the days of its founder. The Umayyads were accused of establishing a secular kingdom at variance with the custom of the Rāshidūn, the first four 'orthodox' caliphs. An historical explanation was thus provided for the notion of a return to lost standards, while approval was given to the basic concept of an ideal past which served as a sanction for the present. This was in keeping with the new learning which was taking shape in the growing body of writing at the hands of the men of letters. Whoever they were, and the majority were of non-Arab origin, living in Iraq, expressing in Arabic things which a generation earlier they might have written in other languages on behalf of Christianity and Judaism, they were concerned with the elaboration and justification of the newer faith. At the heart of the matter was the question of authenticity. Christianity was guaranteed by the Church, which traced itself back to its divine foundation through the apostolic succession, the consecration of bishop by bishop in an unbroken line from the twelve Apostles. Judaism was guaranteed by scholars who were competent to expound the holy Law by what might be called the rabbinical succession of teachers and pupils. Muslims had relied upon the succession of caliphs to keep the faith. But the need to spell out that faith in terms acceptable in the world at large led not to the pronouncement of their authority, but away from it. The Jewish model was preferred.

The Babylonian Talmud had been compiled in the course of the fourth and fifth centuries AD. It reduced to writing the mass of learning and teaching which had grown up beside the Torah or Pentateuch, the first of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible. Together with the Torah, the Talmud formed the textual base of a sacred Law, specifications for correct behaviour in every sphere of life, ordained by God. These specifications were authorized by the written material, but depended upon its correct interpretation by the scholars, the *amoraim*, who were competent to decide without reference to a Jewish priesthood or a Jewish state, both of which had ceased to exist. It was a Law of this kind, which systematically elaborated the seminal notions of divine revelation, inspired prophecy and Holy Scripture, towards which Islam was working. The starting-point was current practice, the laws and customs of the community which had grown up in various ways for various purposes, some to determine the rituals of worship, others to regulate the behaviour of the Faithful towards each other and towards

their leaders. In the course of the eighth century, these customs and laws were converted into something else – the requirements of God for conduct towards Himself. The conversion took place locally, on the basis of local practices which varied from place to place. The assumption, however, was everywhere the same, that the ways of the community were the ways of the Prophet; that what had been done by the Prophet and his companions had been done by divine inspiration; and that in consequence the ways of the community consisted of a series of divine commandments. The problem was to show just what had been revealed in this way by God to man.

Although it was essential to the argument that the community must be right in what it did, this did not mean uncritical acceptance. The present was compared with the past, to decide what should be done by what had been done. Reference was made to what Schacht calls the 'good old days', a time which had ended with the outbreak of the *fitna* in 744, but was steadily pushed back to the days of the Prophet in keeping with the 'Abbāsid view of the golden age of the Rāshidūn. In fact, the description of what the *sunna*, the practice of the community, had been and should be depended very much upon the opinion of respected individuals. This dependence is apparent in the first extant work of *fiqh* or jurisprudence, the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik b. Anas of Medina, who died in 796. The *Muwaṭṭa'* consists of the discussion of topics by quotation of conflicting statements followed by the judgement of the master as recorded by the pupils who compiled the work. It shows indeed how far the process had gone. The description was what mattered, while the operation was in the hands of a recognizable body of students and teachers who came to be called the *fuqahā'* (sing. *faqīh*), 'jurisprudents', who were counted among the *'ulamā'* (sing. *'ālim* or *'alīm*), 'the wise'. The *Muwaṭṭa'* reveals the formality of their procedure, and the way in which their argument continued from generation to generation. The significance of what they were doing is apparent in the administration of justice. Under the Umayyads, the *qāḍī* or judge had been appointed to act on behalf of the caliph and his governors in all cases concerning members of the community. He was an important official whose decisions helped to make the law; in Ifrīqiya he was a justiciar who ruled in the absence of the *wālī*, as in 755 when the *qāḍī* Abū Kurayb is said to have taken charge at Kairouan when Ḥabīb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān went against the Warfajjūma. Under the 'Abbasids, the *qāḍī* was incorporated into the more elaborate system of administration which was typical of the regime. A department appeared under a

Chief Qāḍī, the *qāḍī 'l-quḍāt* or 'judge of judges'. Nevertheless, although the growth of the Muslim community made justice increasingly complex, the higher degree of organization which was required was achieved, not through the *qāḍī* as in former days, but at his expense. The caliph reserved to himself the right to try *maẓālim*, 'complaints' or appeals, at his discretion. Criminal cases were dealt with separately. This was because the law for which the *qāḍī* was responsible was ceasing to be a set of regulations largely made by men for practical purposes. Instead it was turning into a moral law composed of detailed obligations and prohibitions, recommendations and condemnations, procedures and punishments, a religion in the sense of a binding rule prescribed by God. This rule met the civil needs of society only by accident. It was necessary for the ruler to limit its strict application in the courts to ensure the continuation of effective government.

Meanwhile the appearance of the scholars was accompanied by that of other kinds of holy man. They grew up alongside the prayer leaders and preachers in the mosques, which remained the focus of their activities. As they moved from exhortation to exposition, simpler persons preached a simpler message of right and wrong. A passion for holiness produced ascetics of a kind familiar in Christian Egypt and North Africa under the Roman empire as hermits and monks, men of frequently violent zeal. Their devotion was specifically related to the military organization of the early community. The expression *murābiṭan* occurs from the seventh century onwards in al-Kindī and Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam with the meaning 'in or as a garrison'. In the second half of the eighth century, the reform of the Ifrīqiyan army by Yazīd b. Ḥātim al-Muhallabī included the building of coastal forts for defence against Byzantine raids from Sicily. These were called *rubuṭ* or *ribāṭāt* (sing. *ribāṭ*), 'ribats' or places of guard. That of Sousse was a small square castle built round a courtyard. With its prayer-hall on the second floor, it served as a mosque as well as a place of refuge for the small town. It was defended by archers, probably *mawālī*, but at the same time *mujāhidūn*, fighters in the *jihād*, the 'holy war' against the infidel, who were ruled by a strict religious as well as military discipline. These *murābiṭūn*, 'men of the ribat', may have had their counterparts in Egypt. Their dedication was part of a general enthusiasm. It was indignation at the flogging to death of the holy Buhlūl b. Rāshid, because he denounced the sending of weapons, iron and copper to the Byzantines in Sicily, which contributed to the rising which brought Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab to power.

THE NINTH CENTURY AD

Matters of religion thus combined with matters of politics. As in 739, events in Ifrīqiya proved significant of a more general discontent. The Egyptian army had rebelled over pay in 789, the Arabs of the eastern Ḥawf in 794. These were put down by Harthama on his way west in 795, and members of the dynasty were appointed as governors over the province. But in 802 the Arabs rose again, and their rebellion spread into Syria and down into Arabia. Taxes were refused, and in 807 the routes to Mecca and Medina were cut. Persian troops were sent from Iraq, and the Arab chiefs seized and deported. In 809, however, the army at Fusṭāṭ rioted again over pay. Such troubles may indicate a government continually short of revenue. They were not peculiar to Egypt. In the same year, 809, the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd died on his way to deal with the situation in Iran. His death meant a struggle for power between his two sons, Amīn and Ma'mūn, which developed into civil war throughout the empire. At Fusṭāṭ the army divided into the *ahl Miṣr*, the men of Egypt, and the Persian newcomers. The men of Egypt, with the Arabs of the Ḥawf, declared for Amīn, while Harthama b. A'yān set the steward of his Egyptian estates to raise the country for Ma'mūn with the wealth at his disposal.

Amīn was defeated and killed by Ma'mūn in 813, but the fighting continued. Egypt was split between two military leaders, both Persian officers, Sarī b. al-Ḥakam and Ibn al-Wazīr al-Jarawī. Sarī and the Persians held Fusṭāṭ, claiming to rule on behalf of Ma'mūn; Ibn al-Wazīr, however, had allied himself with the Arabs of the eastern Ḥawf, and established himself at Tinnis in the north-east. The frontier was the division between the northern and southern Delta, a line between two economies which neither Sarī nor his opponent could cross. In 816 a third party appeared. Two years before, at Cordoba in Spain, the populace had rioted under the leadership of the men of religion, provoking the Umayyad ruler to destroy a 'suburb' and exile the inhabitants. Some sailed for Egypt, presumably with seamen from the coast, a band of militants in search of a home. At Alexandria they found the Ṣūfīya, zealots at odds with the governor who helped them to capture the city.[1] Thereupon they made themselves the masters, and set up their own republic. Ma'mūn in Iraq was too pre-occupied to

[1] The Ṣūfīya are called a *ṭā'ifa* ('group'), led for a time by one Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī: al-Kindi, *Governors and judges of Egypt*, ed. by R. Guest (Leiden and London, 1912), 162, 440; cf. also A. Mez, *The renaissance of Islam*, trans. by S. K. Bakhsh and D. S. Margoliouth (Patna, 1937), 281–2.

intervene. Sarī and Ibn al-Wazīr were both effectively independent, and when in 820 they were each succeeded by their various sons, the division of the country was enhanced.

In Ifrīqiya in 810, Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab defeated the first rebellion of the *jund* since his accession. The populace of Kairouan rose with the military, obliging the *amīr* finally to take up residence in his new fortress city. In 812 he died, and it was not until the reign of his second son, Ziyādat Allah I, that his work was seriously tested. The rising of an officer of the guard in 822 was followed by revolts of the *jund* in 823 and 824. That of 824, led by Manṣūr al-Tunbudhī, was at Tunis, the second city of Ifrīqiya and the chief centre of opposition since the eighth century. Having taken the place of Carthage, it was a natural capital for the northern districts, where the leaders of the *jund* in their castles were coming to form a powerful aristocracy. The attempt of Ziyādat Allah to recapture the city was repulsed, and although the attack of Manṣūr upon ʿAbbāsiya was defeated, in 825 the Aghlabid *amīr* was routed at Sbiba to the west of Kairouan. His authority was then restricted to the metropolis, the east coast or Sahel, and the south as far as Tripoli, while the remainder was held by the rebel lords. Like Egypt, the country was divided into its natural zones, as previously in the wars against Byzantine Carthage, when Kairouan had been founded as a frontier city.

From 826, however, central government recovered its power in both Ifrīqiya and Egypt. Ziyādat Allah defeated a rebel attempt to invade the Djerid in the south, while ʿAbd Allah b. Ṭāhir, appointed viceroy of the western provinces by Ma'mūn, entered Egypt. The factions submitted, and unity was restored. In 827 the Andalusians were obliged to evacuate Alexandria. They sailed for Crete, which they took from the Byzantines and colonized as pirates. In the same year Ziyādat Allah felt strong enough to launch a more ceremonious invasion of the other Byzantine island of Sicily in support of a rebel governor, Euphemius. The expedition, under the auspicious leadership of the great *qāḍī*, Asad b. al-Furāt, appealed to all sections of the Muslim community, and seems to have distracted attention from the rebellion, which over the next few years petered out. In Egypt, on the other hand, the climax was yet to come. In 828 ʿAbd Allah b. Ṭāhir was succeeded as viceroy of the west by the heir apparent, Muʿtaṣim, the son of Ma'mūn. The attempt of his nominees to restore regular taxation led to risings of both Copts and Arabs in the northern Delta and the Eastern Ḥawf, the lands once ruled by Ibn al-Wazīr, in 829, 830 and 831. These required the presence

of Mu'taṣim and his Turkish general Afshīn; then in 832 the presence of Ma'mūn himself. The region was only pacified with the decimation of the people of the Basharūd, the Copts of the coastal marshes, after they had refused to listen to the appeal of the patriarch. In 834 the Arabs of the Ḥawf, who had probably reasserted their claim to be treated as regular soldiers during the civil war, were finally struck off the register, and their pay, '*aṭā*', stopped. A brief revolt under a son of Ibn al-Wazīr was put down.

In Ifrīqiya, the Aghlabid ruler emerged from his trial of strength with the *jund* as the undisputed head of a central government, a *sulṭān*. He was wealthy, with estates, *ḍiyā'* (sing. *ḍay'a*), around Kairouan and in the Sahel. To the south in the barren region of the Qammūda, water works were built to a Syrian pattern, most probably to pasture his herds of horses, an important military asset.[1] Sousse, Sfax and Gabes, the cities of the Sahel, were held by his governors, as were Tripoli and Tobna, the capital of the Zab. Elsewhere in the west and north, however, the lords of the *jund* formed an hereditary military aristocracy which the *sulṭān* could only dominate with the superior force of the *ḥasham*, the royal retinue. Their strongholds and their men-at-arms reproduced on a smaller scale the model of 'Abbāsiya, just as 'Abbāsiya reproduced Baghdad. They took the devolution of power still further. The system was irregular and incomplete, omitting wide areas and many peoples even within the Ifrīqiyan compass. In the mountains and the deserts were largely self-governing communities, amongst them the Ibadite populations, ruled – if they were ruled at all – by military expeditions. By the middle of the ninth century the picture seems static. A period of calm from 850 onwards is perhaps to be understood as a time when the Aghlabids, engaged in Sicily and southern Italy, let sleeping dogs lie.

Egypt fared differently. Devolution there was, but of a different kind. The establishment of the Aghlabids in Ifrīqiya was indeed prophetic; the appointment by Ma'mūn of viceroys over the western and the eastern provinces is evidence of the growing strain upon government from Baghdad. Under this scheme, however, Egypt was downgraded, with governors appointed by the new overlord, 'Abd Allah, followed by Mu'taṣim. When Mu'taṣim became caliph in 834, the

[1] The works were to water livestock: cf. M. Solignac, 'Recherches sur les installations hydrauliques de Kairouan et des Steppes Tunisiennes du VIIe au XIe siècle', *Annales de l'Institut des Études Orientales* (Algiers), 1952, 10, 5–273; 1953, 11, 61–170. A hundred years later, the Kalbid rulers of Sicily kept large herds of horses: cf. M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, 2nd edn, ed. by C. Nallino (Catania, 1933–5), 2, 441–2.

affairs of the province were finally settled. He was a warrior who had created a large 'slave' army of Turks from central Asia. In 836 he transferred this army to a new capital city at Samarra further up the Tigris. The task of appointing the governor of Egypt was then given to a Turkish officer at Samarra, first Ashīnās and then Ītākh. These became absentee landlords, enjoying much of the country's wealth. The estates and the tax-farms reached their greatest extent as the fiscal burden increased, land went out of production and was let on favourable terms to concessionaries who tried to induce the peasants to return. While there is no need to think with Becker in terms of a catastrophe, it was probably a period of depression, when the area under cultivation was on the whole reduced, and the population may have fallen. The chief beneficiaries in the country were probably the Coptic managers, the tax-collectors and tax-farmers, the bailiffs and the stewards.

The weakness of the government at Fusṭāṭ heightened the effect. There was no question of army leaders continuing to divide the province, but the exclusion of the Arabs from the register was probably an indication of a reduction in the size of the force at the governor's disposal. The restoration of law and order culminated in 836 when official contact was made with Christian Nubia, the *baqṭ* was renegotiated to a Muslim formula, and a son of the Nubian king made his way to Iraq (see further chapter 9, pp. 577–8). But in the 840s the Nubians and the Beja peoples of the deserts bordering the Red Sea invaded Upper Egypt, and were only pushed back by Arab tribesmen wandering south into the region of Aswan. While, according to al-Ya'qūbī, a stretch of the valley in Upper Egypt was evacuated, a prey to nomads and brigands, these Arabs made Aswan their 'capital'. Together with immigrants from across the Red Sea, they colonized the hilly region of the Wadi Allaqi to the south-east, mining for gold with the labour of black slaves. From the Wadi Allaqi they entered into relations, not with the more familiar Nubian kingdom at Dongola, but with the second Christian state of 'Alwa on the Nile in the region of Khartoum, which was reached directly across the desert. Further to the north, says al-Ya'qūbī, gold and ivory entered Egypt from the Red Sea through 'Aydhab, the successor to the old Greek port of Berenice, which gave access to the Nile at Qus. These various activities were carried on by people largely beyond the reach of the authorities at Fusṭāṭ.

By 850, therefore, Egypt was reduced in size as well as status. Nevertheless it continued to share in the concerns of the wider com-

munity. In 814 there came to Fusṭāṭ with a governor appointed by Ma'mūn the great jurist al-Shāfi'ī, who remained there until his death in 821, composing his major work, the *Risāla*. The *Risāla* dealt directly with the problem which underlay the *Muwaṭṭa'*, the problem of proof. Those who relied upon the opinion of the wise to guarantee the Law had been obliged to concede that this opinion should if possible be grounded in scripture. There was, however, no agreement about what this scripture was to be. It was in these years, for example, that the *kitāb Allah*, 'the Book of God', the Koran, if it did not assume its final form at least became the object of controversy: whether it was not a source of Law at all; whether it was the sole source; or whether it was, like the Torah, the focal point of the corpus. Still more important was the question of the *ḥawādīth* (sing. *ḥadīth*), 'traditions' of the sayings and doings of the Prophet and his companions which were being written down in the form: 'B told A that C told B that D told C . . . that Y told X that he had seen or heard one of these founders do or say such and such.' This recitation of the *isnād*, the chain of transmission from teller to teller, was the pedigree by which the authenticity of the story was judged. At first the *ḥawādīth* were not admitted for legal purposes against the opinion of the wise, but since they purported to give an account of the *sunna*, the practice of the community, at the very beginning of its history, acceptance of their authenticity meant that they could not be ignored.

It was the achievement of al-Shāfi'ī to resolve this argument with an arrangement of the *uṣūl*, the 'roots' or sources of the Law, in order of importance. The Koran was given pride of place as the Word of God revealed to Muḥammad. Its relatively short text was to be supplemented in the second place by *ḥadīth*, the record of the Sunna or Practice of the Prophet. Should that record still leave anything obscure, then the *sunna*, or the practice of the existing community, which was deemed to transmit the Sunna of the Prophet by continuous usage, might be invoked under the name of *ijmā'*, 'consensus'. In the last resort, a jurist might rely upon *qiyās*, his own reasoning by analogy. The scheme, resembling that of Talmudic Judaism, was successful because its logic was incontrovertible. The Word of God Himself had to come first. The recognition of *ḥadīth* as a scriptural record of a divine revelation at the root of the legal practice of the community then placed the sacred character of its Law finally beyond doubt. The individual *ḥawādīth* were the proof. Their use completed the transformation of the laws and customs of the Umayyads into a unique

dispensation. Expressed as traditions handed down from teller to teller, beliefs and practices of any date from the seventh to the beginning of the ninth century were formally ascribed to Muḥammad and so to God.

Al-Shāfiʿī established the principle without bringing the argument over the Law to an end. Different traditions gave scriptural force to different opinions. The majority of the *fuqahā'* held that the traditions which defined the Sunna of the Prophet defined their own *sunna*, which had remained faithful to the great original by the grace of God; thus they alone could give a correct interpretation. These Sunnites were opposed to the Shiʿites, who gave especial weight to traditions about ʿAlī, and saw in his descendants the recipients of divine guidance to compare with the inspiration which more orthodox jurists claimed for their scholarship. Such guidance was likewise claimed by the ʿAbbasids as caliphs from the house of the Prophet. The question of who should decide in matters of doctrine became acute over the Koran. About 800 the Muʿtazilites emerged as a school of philosophy and theology. They were not a school of Law, but took up a position on the Law when they insisted on the priority of the Koran to the exclusion of *ḥadīth*. They were thus in opposition to the majority of the *'ulamā'*. The Muʿtazilites, however, became fashionable at court at a time when Ma'mūn was seeking the political support of the Shīʿa, and turning away from the *ahl al-Sunna* or 'people of the Practice'. It was a serious matter when Ma'mūn endorsed the Muʿtazilite doctrine that the Koran had been created by God against the view that it was, like God, eternal. When in 833 he promulgated this so-called *khalq* doctrine, or doctrine of creation, as the law of the empire, it was seen as an attack upon the Sunnites and the authority upon which they relied. The decree was enforced by a *miḥna*, an 'inquisition', to compel jurists and *qāḍīs* to subscribe on pain of disgrace, imprisonment and even death.

The *miḥna* was a drastic if unsuccessful attempt by the caliph to arbitrate in matters of faith. It was introduced into Egypt in 833, and renewed under the caliph Wāthiq in 842. It produced a crop of martyrs before the decree was rescinded at the accession of Mutawakkil in 849. The hand of the ʿAbbasids continued to be heavy – witness the disgrace of the Banū ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, the family of jurists to which the historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam belonged, on a charge of peculation in the 850s. The failure of the *khalq* decree was nevertheless a victory for the scholars. This appears from the tale of events in Ifrīqiya, which may have been modelled on the story of Iraq. The Qāḍī of Ifrīqiya had kept

his original importance as chief justice of the realm. Standing also for the Law, he enjoyed immense prestige as a leader of the community quite apart from the *amīr* who appointed him. The post was held by some eminent men. Asad b. al-Furāt not only led the expedition to Sicily in 827. As a jurist he improved upon the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik b. Anas with a treatise called the *Asadiya*, an exposition of the Law obtained by the device of systematically questioning an older master. After his death in camp in 828, he was succeeded as the outstanding jurist of Kairouan by Saḥnūn, the author of the *Mudawwana*. This was the definitive successor to the *Asadiya*, using the same technique of the *su'āl* or *mas'ala*, the question, to elicit replies more formally in accordance with the *uṣūl* described by al-Shāfi'ī. The place of Asad as Qāḍī of Ifrīqiya, however, was taken by the Mu'tazilite Ibn Abī 'l-Jawād, who remained in office under Ziyādat Allah I, his brother Abū 'Iqāl (838–41), and Abū 'Iqāl's son Muḥammad I. Saḥnūn was patronized by a family of *wazīrs*, 'Alī b. Ḥumayd and his sons. But in 846/7 this family was overthrown in a coup by Muḥammad's brother, and Saḥnūn was tried for his life by the Qāḍī in the matter of the 'created Qur'ān'. The situation was only redressed when Muḥammad disgraced his brother, and Saḥnūn himself was made Qāḍī and had his predecessor flogged so that he died.

This savage justice stood for the triumph of the Sunna over its opponents. It did so because it was the particular victory of the Mālikī school. The schools of opinion in the eighth century had been regional, comprising the scholars of Arabia or Iraq. The emphasis upon the transmission of doctrine from master to pupil, made increasingly precise by the technique of question and answer, meant a growing concentration upon personalities, and the selection by each school of an intellectual ancestor. Thus the school of Mecca and Medina, taking Mālik b. Anas for a founder, became the Mālikī school, while that of Iraq became the Ḥanafī school after his near contemporary Abū Ḥanīfa. In the ninth century in Egypt, a third school formed from the disciples of al-Shāfi'ī, while a fourth derived from Ibn Ḥanbal, who fell victim to the *miḥna* at Baghdad in the 840s. The ancestry, especially in the case of the earlier figures, was not precise; the authority of the founder was invoked for the labours of subsequent scholars as a guarantee of continuity between past and present. It ensured that their understanding of the Law which had been revealed to Muḥammad was correct. In this way the *Mudawwana* of Saḥnūn, for example, which stated the views of the wise in the ninth century, became of necessity a true interpretation

of the way of God, even though it differed on certain points from the equally authoritative compendia of the other schools.

Thus the Law, the *sharī'a* or *shar'*, terms with the connotation of 'enactment', 'fountain' and 'way', assumed its final form. On the one hand it was a single scheme, a divine product which it was humanly impossible to know and to follow in its perfection. On the other, it was the extent of human knowledge of this ideal, based on divine revelation, preserved by custom and tradition with petty discrepancies which marked the imperfection of human understanding, and eventually spelt out in the writings of the ninth century. This codification in accordance with the divergent doctrines of each school was decisive. From the tenth century onwards, the concern of the scholar was no longer with the *uṣūl*, the 'roots' and their meaning, but with the *furū'*, the 'branches', the ramifications from the trunk. As far as other opinions were concerned, the 'people of the Sunna' agreed to differ on points which were admittedly trivial but at the same time fundamental, part of the divine dispensation. The schools divided accordingly into four *madhāhib* (sing. *madhhab*), 'roads along which to go'. Differences between these *madhāhib* and the Shi'ite and Kharijite schools which stood outside this Sunnite tradition were considered to be more substantial. These unorthodox schools, however, had all evolved along the same lines in the same milieu to produce the same kind of doctrine in the same form. The majority of Shi'ites, for example, who had come to settle on the line of Ḥusayn as the line of the true *imāms*, referred back to the sixth such *imām*, Ja'far, who died in 765. Called significantly al-Ṣādiq, 'the Authentic', he stood in the same kind of relation to their tradition as his contemporary Abū Ḥanīfa to the Sunnite school of Iraq. The differences which distinguished them from the orthodox majority were still no more than differences in detail.

These divisions were reflected in society at large. The Muslim community was dividing into confessions as it became politically divided into states and regions. The Maghrib was particularly varied, with Ibadites and Sufrites, Shi'ites and Sunnites, side by side. Sunnī Islam was centred upon Ifrīqiya, where Kairouan was the religious capital of the Muslim west. A minority of jurists were Hanafite, but the majority, following Saḥnūn, were Malikite. Malikites likewise predominated in the Delta, but in Upper Egypt Shafi'ites were numerous. The effect of these divisions varied. On the whole Sunnites lived together, worshipped together, and might intermarry. Shi'ites and Kharijites were more segregated. In the tenth century, in the Sus in

south-west Morocco, Ibn Ḥawqal reported that Sunnites and Shi'ites used the same mosque on alternate days.[1] At the same time in Ifrīqiya, Sunnites were not prepared to allow Ibadites to have their own mosque in an Ifrīqiyan city, or to take Sunnite wives.[2] Faction-fighting, however, took place in Baghdad between Malikites and Shafi'ites as well as between Malikites and Shi'ites.[3] Communalism was maintained by the needs of justice; in principle, different *madhāhib* meant different judgements by different persons. In practice, the state made little allowance, although the Aghlabids for example made a habit of appointing a Hanafite to assist or even replace the Malikite who held the post of Chief Qāḍī, not for the sake of the Law so much as their own political convenience. Instead, the members of a school might submit their cases privately to a jurist of their choice. In this way it was in fact possible for them to order their lives without recourse to the machinery of the Muslim state.

Such behaviour came naturally to a persecuted minority, such as the Ibadites in the major Ifriqiyan cities; it was already typical of the Jews, who had devised their Law to meet the needs of a people without a state of their own. It is therefore not surprising that it became more generally characteristic of a religion which resembled Talmudic Judaism so closely. The orthodox majority became accustomed to settling its affairs 'out of court'. Irrespective of the school, Islamic jurisprudence was well fitted to control by advice and consent. It did so by an extension of the technique of question and answer from theoretical to actual cases. The problem posed by the petitioner, the answer came not as a judgement binding upon the parties, such as a court might give, but as a considered opinion of what the Law required, just like the solutions propounded as examples in the books of *fiqh*. This opinion was the *fatwā* (pl. *fatāwī*, *fatāwā*); he who gave it, a *muftī*. It provided the basis for agreement, or for action. The giving of these formal consultations became a common practice. A *fatwā* might be requested for the sake of politeness, as a compliment to a great scholar by one able to afford an appropriate present.[4] In any case it would be preserved by the recipient on the one hand, the disciples on the other, to pass eventually into collections adding to the store of works of reference. As a contribution to the life of the community, it made

[1] Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. by J. H. Kramers (Leiden, 1938–9), 91–2; trans. by J. H. Kramers and G. Wiet, *Configuration de la Terre* (Beirut and Paris, 1964), 90.
[2] H. R. Idris, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Zīrides, Xe–XIIe siècles* (Paris, 1962), 744–5.
[3] Mez, *Renaissance*, 215. [4] Idris, *Berbérie orientale*, 176–7.

possible an alternative system of government in which the *sulṭān*, the (man of) power, the state, had no necessary part to play.

In theory perhaps this was not so; it is commonly said that in Islam, as opposed to Christendom, church and state are one, since the holy Law is administered by the ruler.[1] Even so, the ruler stands in the same relation to the Law as the emperor to the Pope in the eyes of an Innocent III. Moreover, the Law was in the hands of its professional guardians, the *'ulamā'* or men of knowledge, a clerical body whose authority, at least in Sunnite Islam, was beyond the ruler's reach. Meanwhile the state departed so regularly from the *sharī'a* that in many ways it was a law to itself. The theory is discovered to be a compromise; the ruler acted under a dispensation called the *siyāsa shar'īya*, 'legitimate expediency' in political matters, which allowed him to do as he thought fit in the execution of his duty. Thus the practice of restricting the jurisdiction of the *qāḍī* and his court to ritual matters and family affairs was formally permitted. Beyond that, any illegality might be ignored on the grounds that any ruler was better than none. The refusal of the *'ulamā'* to countenance rebellion was not merely subservience, nor even simple prudence; it was a more fundamental abstention. Refraining from such decisions, they preserved their legal rectitude, their ritual purity, the condition which fitted them to offer their considered opinions, the fruits of their wisdom, to the world. The special nature of this position was celebrated. When, says the eleventh-century poet, Ibn Rashīq, of the glories of Kairouan,

> the number of its pulpits was the flower of the land . . . how many were in it of nobles and gentles . . . a school which gathered all accomplishments, and squandered its treasure to its lord and to its people; *imāms* who brought together the sciences of religion, setting right the uses of *ḥadīth* and problems of the Qur'ān; doctors who if you asked them rolled away the clouds with jurisprudence and eloquent elucidation . . . you shall see the giants among kings in their presence bend their necks, lowering their chins; in their dread they cannot say a word, simply make signs with their hands and eyes; such men fear God and all mortals fear them, as dogs the lion in the hunt; awe of them makes you forget the loftiness of kings and the grandeur of sultans; their lightest thoughts weigh as mountains, and their excellence, like the sun, is not hidden anywhere.[2]

[1] Cf. e.g. E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political thought in medieval Islam* (Cambridge, 1958), 23–4; the author avoids the contrast between *sulṭān* and *'ālim* by discussing the relationship of the caliph to the simple *amīr*.

[2] *Qaṣīda* quoted by Ibn Nāji, *Ma'ālim al-imān* (Tunis, AH 1320), 15–18, lines 1–18; cf. M. Brett, 'Fitnat al-Qayrawān', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1970), 485–6.

To sages such as these, the faithful might safely look for guidance in their everyday affairs, whoever ruled the land.

The eulogy of Ibn Rashīq expressed a legend which had gained strength in the tenth century, when Ifrīqiya was ruled by the Shi'ite Fatimid Dynasty, and the starkness of the separation of the men of wisdom from the men of power was brought home to the Sunnites as previously to the Ibadites. A more normal relationship is apparent in the history of the *qāḍī* and his office in Ifrīqiya. The *qāḍī* was in an ambiguous position, on the one hand an officer of state, on the other a minister of the Law. As an officer of the 'Abbasids in the east, his powers were limited and his post shunned by the scholars, who were unwilling to convert an imperfect opinion into an imperfect but irrevocable judgement. As a minister, he nevertheless enjoyed immense prestige as a leader of the community quite apart from the ruler who appointed him. Thus in the tenth century al-Kindī could produce two lists to describe the history of Muslim Egypt, one of the *wulāt*, the governors, the other of the *quḍāt*, the judges. As an officer of the Aghlabids in the west, the power of the Qāḍī of Ifrīqiya was enhanced by his prestige; throughout the ninth century he continued to supervise the general administration of justice, although his judgements over this wide field were probably equitable rather than strictly doctrinal. His grandeur is expressed by the tale of Ibn Ghānim, who refused to rise in the presence of Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab. His peril, however, is apparent in the story of Ibn al-Farūk, who in 787 was forced to accept the office on pain of death, and in that of Saḥnūn himself, who upon his appointment is said to have declared that he was 'slaughtered without a knife'.[1] These stories anticipate a long decline from the time of Asad b. al-Furāt to the twelfth century, when the state had begun to appoint and pay a *muftī* to advise the *qāḍī* on his judgements in a more restricted area. As in the east, the position of the *qāḍī* had suffered from the growing separation of powers and authorities. At the same time, the appointment of a *muftī* from the ranks of the *fuqahā'* shows how far government by command and compulsion, and government by adjudication and agreement, had become not alternative but complementary. The *sulṭān* found the mediation of the *'ālim* convenient, and sometimes necessary. In 875 the Aghlabid Ibrāhīm II was able to set aside his nephew's claim to the throne with the aid of a *ḥīla*, a 'device', a dispensation from his oath of loyalty declared licit by the jurists of Kairouan.

[1] Quoted by N. J. Coulson, *A history of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh, 1964), 126.

ISLAMIZATION AND ARABIZATION

The principal symbol of the religion of Islam and its community was the mosque or *masjid*, the 'place of worship', in the form of the *jāmi'* or 'congregational' mosque, a place of assembly and meeting, the seat perhaps of the *qāḍī* and his court, the location of the scholars with their circles of students, but most especially the place where the Faithful gathered on a Friday for the chief public prayer. Then, if ever, 'church and state' were one as the *khuṭba* or 'sermon' was pronounced in the presence of the ruler or his representative, either in his name or in that of the sovereign from whom he claimed his power. Repeated week after week, the pronouncement became a necessary mark of the true prince. It was worth the effort to ensure that the edifice which provided the scene was of a size and splendour to match the occasion. In the ninth century, all the great mosques of Egypt and North Africa which dated from the early days of the conquest were enlarged to their present size, while new ones were founded. In the Maghrib the original N-S-E-W orientation, which may have been determined by the layout of the *miṣr* as a Roman square, and certainly antedates the time when it was felt necessary to pray and to build in the direction of Mecca, was retained; it was only changed for mosques built after the tenth century. The nave and transept form of the prayer hall in the Great Mosque of Damascus was modified by the Iraqi design of a flat roof supported by row upon row of columns to give a more extensive covered area on one side of a colonnaded court. This feature of the mosque of al-Aqṣā, built at Jerusalem in 780, was copied in 787 by 'Abd al-Raḥmān I at Cordoba. In 827 'Abd Allah b. Ṭāhir ordered the mosque of 'Amr at Fusṭāṭ to be doubled in size. In 836 at Kairouan, the mosque of 'Uqba, rebuilt by Yazīd b. Ḥātim, was demolished by Ziyādat Allah I, and the present edifice with its large square minaret was begun. In 850/1 the great mosque of Sousse replaced the prayer hall of the *ribāṭ* with a new and separate building. Meanwhile a fresh lead was taken by Iraq with the erection of the great mosque of Samarra as part of the palace city complex founded by Mu'taṣim. When Abū Ibrāhīm Aḥmad completed the great mosque of Kairouan in 862/3, it was with material imported from Iraq or in the Samarran style. In 864 it was by the command of the Caliph Musta'īn that the great mosque of Tunis, the Zaytūna, was rebuilt in its present form.

The progressive construction and enlargement of these great buildings, however, was not simply a product of the new monarchy and its

taste for grandeur. It seems that building went forward roughly in proportion to the growth of the Muslim city.[1] As the elements of ancient culture were refashioned into 'the renaissance that was Islam', to read the title of a well-known work in the sense in which it was intended,[2] society as a whole was transformed. The community which had begun as a predominantly military body had turned into a cross-section of the population. How this happened is obscured rather than illuminated by the growing clarity of the faith. The history of recruitment had ended with the exclusion of the tribes from the *dīwān* and the formation of armies of *'abīd*. Islam on the other hand looked back to the conquests as the accomplishment of the divine purpose, and saw in the profession of faith an upward progress in the divine scheme. As a subject requiring further description and explanation, the continuous increase in the number of Muslims was largely ignored. Such indeed was the strength of this point of view that in many cases where new believers might be suspected, their *islām* has been attributed to the time of the Futūḥ, or considered to be a faith happily improved after a period of ignorance and neglect. Rather more revealing are the discussions of the related matters of language and race. Admiration of the Arabs as the people of the Prophet, and of Arabic as the language of God Himself in the Koran, went back to the situation in the seventh century, but did not wholly match the Muslim concept. The discrepancies were used to justify attitudes of historical, social and cultural superiority. In Iraq, Arabs and Persians satirized each other in the so-called *Shu'ūbiya*, 'the Nationalisms', a kind of polemic which became a theme of the new literature. In the Maghrib, the Berbers were attacked and defended in sayings attributed to Muḥammad. The ascetic Buhlūl b. Rāshid is said to have celebrated the proof that his ancestry was wholly Arab with a feast. By contrast, the Rustamids of Tahert prided themselves upon descent from the royal house of ancient Persia, while their Berber followers claimed to be the elect of God, fighting for the faith rather than – like the Arabs – for material reward.

The invariable use of Arabic for such literary boasting illustrates a change which was not necessarily religious. In Andalus, the *muwalladūn*, 'those brought up as Arabs', had adopted both Islam and Arabic; the *musta'ribūn* (Mozarabs), 'those claiming to be Arabs', were Christians who had adopted only Arabic. The situation was evidently the same in Egypt, where in the tenth century Severus b. Muqaffa' explained that he

[1] A. Lézine, 'Notes d'archéologie ifriqiyenne', *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 1967, 35, 69–70.
[2] See Margoliouth, 'Introductory note', in Mez, *Renaissance*.

was obliged to have his material translated, with great difficulty, out of Greek and Coptic, since the knowledge of these original tongues had almost disappeared. In Ifrīqiya the use of Latin is attested in inscriptions down to the eleventh century at Kairouan, as well as in papal letters of Leo IX and Gregory VII, but may have been severely restricted. The Jews certainly kept their Hebrew for religious purposes, but for others they came to write Arabic in Hebrew characters. The reasons for the increasing use of Arabic have little to do with its status as the language of Islam. They are more probably related to its official use in Egypt and North Africa as the language of administration and affairs. The situation for illiterates may well have been different. Here the classical languages may have lingered despite what Severus says;[1] in the twelfth century, Idrīsī has a report of Latin spoken in the Djerid.[2] There can be no doubt about the persistence of the languages of the Berber speakers, whatever their religion, since these languages have survived to the present not only in the more remote regions of the Maghrib, but also, with particular tenacity, among the remaining Ibadite communities. The spread of Arabic among this section of the population is much harder to perceive and to explain, involving as it has done the development of vernaculars apart from the written standard.

Nevertheless, the adoption of Arabic by non-Muslims emphasizes their refusal to accept the religion with which it was so closely associated even after the prohibitions upon membership of the community had become a thing of the past, and the profession of faith was largely open. It is apparent that differences of creed continued to serve some purpose. In Egypt their utility seems to go back to the end of the seventh century, when pressure was put upon the higher officials of the administration to abandon their Christianity. At the beginning of the eighth century there was an attempt, connected with the name of Ashīnās, to exclude Christians from 'the ministry'. It is perhaps possible to see the beginning of a compromise in the structural reform of the administration which separated the *amīr* from the *'āmil*, the governor from the intendant of finance. Although the evidence does not accumulate until a later period, it is likely that this separation of powers extended to the pagarchy which the Arabs had first taken over and strengthened. It survived the breakdown during the civil war, helping to produce within the administration an important distinction between the chancery and the treasury, the

[1] Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edn (Leiden and London, 1913–38), under Ḳibṭ.

[2] al-Idrīsī, *Kitāb nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*, ed. and trans. by R. Dozy and M. J. de Goeje, *Description de l'Afrique du Nord et de l'Espagne* (Leiden, 1866), 121 trans. 141.

secretariat and the fiscal regime. It was with the latter that the Christian official was progressively identified, making it his particular preserve. An alternative career was provided by the Church, which continued to be well endowed. The *proteuontes* of the Greek papyri may have turned to tax-farming, a traditional form of investment, as well as to estate management on behalf of aristocratic landowners. The wealthier among them were probably tempted to abandon their Christianity, joining the ranks of the *aʿyān*, the notables of the Muslim period. But the loss of such people to the Coptic community was perhaps a measure of the opportunities available at a lower level to those Christians with the necessary skill and talent in clerical work, administration and handicraft. It is likely that such specialized activites ensured that the towns of Egypt, with exceptions like Fusṭāṭ, where an original population had been outnumbered by Muslim immigrants, were still mainly Christian.

The peasants, on the other hand, derived no such advantage from their faith. Although they were slow to change, it is possible to see in their situation in the ninth century the conditions which prepared the way for their complete islamization. The suppression of the revolt of the Basharūd in 832, which ended the series of peasant rebellions which began in 725, was taken by the fifteenth-century al-Maqrīzī as the beginning of a Muslim majority in the country. Glossing the account of al-Kindī, he says that from that date

> God abased the Qibṭ in all the land of Egypt; their strength waned so that they were incapable of resistance to the *sulṭān*. The Muslims prevailed in, or took possession of, the villages (*ghalaba al-muslimūn ʿalā ʾl-quran*), and the Qibṭ turned to plot against Islam and its people, notably by having a hand in the collection of taxes.[1]

From this Becker concluded that the Arabs had settled as agriculturalists on the land, while the Qibṭ had accepted Islam at least in appearance, thereby mingling with the Muslims to the extent of taking Muslim wives.[2] There is no warrant for this conclusion in the Arabic, which looks too much like an attempt to account historically for the unpopular Christian official. If the date will not stand, however, the hypothesis is plausible. The relevant factor is not the occurrence or suppression of rebellion, which took place mainly in the northern Delta, but the flight from the villages which elsewhere accompanied the growth of the estates. A large measure of resettlement was evidently involved. New men found new masters, all the more because the fugitive continued to

[1] al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, I, 334–5. [2] Becker, *Beiträge*, II, 120–1, 135.

be a wanted man in need of protection.[1] This fitted well with contemporary practice, in which followings of slaves and clients were the rule; it must have been encouraged by the state itself when the tax-farmer was commissioned to attract labour onto uncultivated land with the offer of favourable terms. It was consonant with a return to conditions resembling those of the Byzantine period.

In the ninth century religion was not necessarily involved. A peasant, leaving home, may have professed a new faith in God when he accepted a new bond to man. On the other hand, the tax-lists from the Arabic papyri of the ninth century contain for the most part Christian names. Even when they are Arab, the bearers may not have been Muslim. In the tenth century, Ibn Ḥawqal considered that the Qibṭ were the people of Egypt.[2] On the other hand, the Christian peasant, who had once been forbidden to become a client member of the Muslim community lest the land go out of production, now found himself on the same footing as Muslims in a similar condition of dependence. Whereas the Muslims of the towns, growing in number by natural increase and by immigration, may have emphasized their Islam as a measure of their difference from the Christians of the Coptic quarters, in and around the old fortress of Babylon for example, those of the countryside may have been less exclusive. The appearance of a rural Muslim population began with the stationing of Arab beduin on either side of the Delta. By the ninth century, these had either been settled as cultivators, or obliged to perform duties such as the transport of grain to Qulzum on the Red Sea, unless they had wandered south. Meanwhile the acquisition of estates by the Muslim aristocracy had brought their followers onto the irrigated land. The lord's men and the tribesmen seem to have come together. A papyrus which lists peasants with Arab names speaks also of 'ten beduin of my lord'. It is reasonable to think that many such beduin, as in more recent times, came to settle individually as cultivators, especially at a time when peasant labour was scarce and valuable. In these circumstances, in which Muslims and Christians encountered each other in the countryside on the same terms, it is possible that Islam, and in this particular instance vernacular Arabic, spread in the rural population by demographic extension from generation to generation. For Becker, the Copts accepted Islam to the extent of taking Muslim wives; but given what must be assumed to be a fundamentally static population fluctuating between a maximum of seven million and a

[1] Becker, 'Papyrusstudien', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 1909, **22**, 137–54.
[2] Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 161 trans. 159.

minimum of two or three,[1] the taking of Christian wives by Muslims, Coptic wives by Arabs, could simply have enlarged the number of Muslims and the number of native Arabic speakers in each succeeding generation, until rural Egypt had been in effect repopulated.

Such an account, of colonization rather than conversion, leaves out of consideration the undoubted passion of Islam. This may have owed something to the native Christian tradition of monks and hermits. Dhū 'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, 'the Egyptian', who died in 860, is said to have studied the hieroglyphs in his search for wisdom. He is one of the traditional founders of Sufism, the widespread devotionalism apparently called after *ṣūf*, 'wool', the material of the garment worn by the pious contemplative. The Ṣūfīya who aided the Andalusians at Alexandria in 816, however, were more fanatical. Standing upon the obligation to command the good and prohibit the bad, they were critical of, or actively opposed to, the state in much the same way as the *murābiṭūn* of Ifrīqiya. In 869, one Ibn al-Ṣūfī may have claimed divine inspiration for an attack upon the ungodly; the town of Asna was sacked, its people massacred, and the commander who had been sent against the insurgents mutilated and crucified. The likelihood that such behaviour stemmed from the specifically Islamic activity of the holy war need not conflict with the notion of an origin in some earlier enthusiasm. This, indeed, would make the Muslim practice more comprehensible. Here as elsewhere, it is probable that Islam was conforming to a type. But although religious agitation may have been symptomatic, it was inconclusive. Only in the Maghrib did fervour find an outlet.

The Afāriq were comparable to the Qibṭ. The dearth of evidence, however, is in itself a sign that their situation was more precarious. Unlike the metropolitan Jacobite Church, their church was merely a province of Rome. Comparing unfavourably with the Church in Spain, it failed to produce any manifestation of note either within the western or, more important, within the Arabic tradition. By the twelfth century their Christianity was extinct. This feebleness can be partly explained by the presence of a second native population. The first attempt to rule the Barbar had ended in the creation of a separate Muslim community. The outcome followed from the methods used, which had procured for the conquerors adherents rather than subjects. Similar methods continued to produce similar results. The Barbar were inducted into a new society in the course of wars, raids, expeditions and alliances. The Muslim

[1] Cf. Préaux, 'Graeco-Roman Egypt', 350; F. Mengin, *Histoire de l'Égypte sous le gouvernement de Mohammed-Aly* (Paris, 1823), II, 616.

order of the ninth century was superimposed upon naturally mobile peoples, and brought their wanderings for cultivation and pasture within the scope of a commercial as well as a political economy. What began with slaves and fleeces sent to Damascus developed into trade. Seasonal movements and seasonal campaigns went with seasonal markets and seasonal caravans. The network took in the traffic of the Sahara, extending westwards to Spain, eastwards to Egypt, and northwards across the central Mediterranean. The appearance of merchant families among the Ibadite populations is evidence of the growth of the market, and some indication of its capacity to reward those who made it their business.

The pattern was complicated. Berber girls were valued in the east, while Berber soldiers appeared in the armies of Egypt and Iraq (see chapter 10). Europeans and Negroes were imported, some for re-export. Refugees came and went. Rebels from the Ifriqiyan *jund* fled to Tahert, Fez and Andalus, while some of the fugitives from Cordoba in 814 were received by the Aghlabids. Many came from the east to trade, or to sell their services as soldiers and statesmen, artists, craftsmen and technicians. Syrians seem to have built the reservoirs to the south of Kairouan which opened up a barren district, most probably to horses, herded perhaps by nomads in the *sulṭān*'s employ.[1] The use of black slaves as labourers in the Djerid may have enlarged the irrigated area;[2] further north, colonies of Negroes appeared on marshy land near the coast. Meanwhile immigration into the cities turned Sousse, for example, from a *ribāṭ* to a major port. Around the cities cultivation spread in various ways. It was probably always possible to make a freehold in the waste for the family or clan. Lordships, on the other hand, led to sharecropping on terms which ranged from *munāṣafa*, division of the produce into equal halves, to what was later called *khammāsa*, retention of a fifth by the tenant. Proprietors might be rich or poor, the occupants anyone from the man who took the land to be worked for him by another, to the serf or slave. Such tenancies applied to all kinds of land with all kinds of husbandry – from irrigated to dry, from trees to standing crops to animals – and may have offered considerable inducements to the cultivator. Pastoral nomads may have been encouraged by the market for livestock, leather and wool. While

[1] The anecdote cited by Idris, *Berbérie orientale*, 749, of an Ibadite shaykh who herded horses in Cap Bon (?), may reflect such an arrangement.

[2] In the Djerid in 826, the rebel 'Āmir b. Nāfi' raised a thousand *sūdān* armed with axes and spades: Ibn 'Idhārī, *Kitāb al-Bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa'l-Maghrib*, ed. by G. S. Colin and E. Lévi-Provençal, 1 (Leiden, 1948), 101.

the mountain peoples kept to themselves, it is likely that individuals continually left the hills for the new civilization.

While Arabic was slow to spread beyond the cities, the growth of the new Ifrīqiya was actively religious. As the Arabian cities of Mecca and Medina became established as *the* Holy Places of Islam, the *ḥajj* or pilgrimage grew into a regular routine. This characteristic act of medieval piety was an added motive for travel which gave purpose and direction to the wanderings of the merchant in search of a market, the student in search of a teacher, or the man in search of the world. A pilgrimage was not yet perhaps the goal of life, but it added to the traffic and the business of the routes, even if those who set out for the east from Andalus, for example, seem often to have got no further than Kairouan. The pilgrim may have been easily diverted to pious ends which seemed more urgent. Among these was the holy war. The odyssey of the refugees from Cordoba, their welcome by the Ṣūfīya at Alexandria, and their subsequent conquest of Crete, showed how easily the zealous took up arms. When in 827 the Aghlabids resumed the offensive in the central Mediterranean, the armada which sailed for Sicily was composed of contingents from many sectors of the population, the Arabs, the *jund*, the Barbar, and yet more of the Andalusians who had fled from Spain. *Muṭṭawi'ūn*, 'volunteers', in the general as well as the specific sense of irregulars who followed the host for material as well as spiritual reward, they were not simply raiders but also settlers who, for the first time for a hundred years, established a new Muslim community *ex nihilo* in a new country.

Their achievement is a measure of the Islam of Ifrīqiya. It was not the work of the original army, which had been transformed out of existence. The impetus had to be recreated under different conditions. These were the conditions of society under the Aghlabids. The energies which went into the pursuit of power, plunder, profit, employment and land across the Mediterranean were those of North Africa, powerfully concentrated by a militant fervour. They were promoted as well as revealed by the Sicilian venture, which showed clearly the opportunities open to the Faithful, and was an added inducement to move in upon their society, economy and culture. Some indication of the success of Islam in these circumstances is provided, paradoxically, by the transformation of the *murābiṭūn*, the men of the ribats who had been the inspiration of the Sicilian venture, from devout soldiers into monk-like devotees. The change can be seen at Sousse, where in 821 there was a significant addition to the function of the *ribāṭ* as a fortress and a

mosque, with the building of a round tower as a look-out post as well as a minaret. From the time of the invasion of Sicily in 827, however, the town grew rapidly, and in 850/1 the fact was recognized with the building of the great mosque by the side of the *ribāṭ*. In 859 the old building then lost its military importance with the building of the town walls and the erection of the citadel on the hill above the port. It simply continued as a kind of monastery for its inhabitants, ascetics who had lost any military character apart from the discipline they observed.

As this happened, the term *ribāṭ* ceased to have any necessary application to a garrison or fortress, although it continued to be used in this sense. It became a name for any house of such holy men, and eventually acquired a spiritual sense as a synonym for *jihād* or *islām*. The name *murābiṭ* evolved like that of *ṣufī* in the east with a more general meaning of 'holy man', *faqīr* (pl. *fuqarā'*), literally 'poor man'. Saints of this kind were familiar from their prototypes, beggars, monks, hermits and priests, Christian and pagan, and it is likely that their appearance in these roles was in itself a sign of the growing acceptance of their faith. From the cities they moved into the countryside, where they might enjoy exceptional authority for the blessing they brought and the curse they could bestow. Away from the main towns, this authority became an important part of village and tribal life, restraining the quarrelsome and restricting the perpetual feuds. In the ninth century, the principal examples of such authority were provided by the Ibadite shaykhs of the south, persuading, advising, exhorting and commanding their followers in the name of God. Many grew rich and powerful, gathering their disciples around them in settlements of which they were chiefs. Other holy men were less reputable. Their wanderings brought them nevertheless into contact with the people who did not leave home, but may have become Muslim by degrees, simply by acknowledging the existence of the man of God in their midst and making use of his powers and skills. To the west of Ifrīqiya such persons may have settled in the Tell, the mountainous belt between the plateau and the sea, claiming descent from Ḥasan, son of 'Alī, to pass as natural saints in secluded valleys to the north of the main route to Tlemcen.[1]

The notion of hereditary holiness, developing out of the feeling for the family of the Prophet which had played so important a part in the history of the community, brought these characters into the lineage structure of the population. As one of the basic ways in which their Islam spread to the people, the phenomenon is a special case of the

[1] Cf. M. Talbi, *L'Émirat aghlabide, 184–296/800–909: histoire politique* (Paris, 1966), 567–9.

demographic process of change which, applying to Egypt, can be considered as one of the ways in which this process occurred in the Nile Valley. In the Maghrib it was one among many factors which operated outside the Aghlabid dominions either separately or in conjunction with each other. Immigration was of fundamental importance in the creation of the main cities. After its foundation by Ibn Rustam, Tahert was populated by a continuous stream of arrivals from the east, mainly from Ifrīqiya, but some from as far away as Iraq; the cosmopolitan mixture was described by the traveller Ibn al-Ṣaghīr towards the end of the ninth century. Fez, refounded in 809 by Idrīs II, attracted yet another band of exiles from Cordoba who settled on the right bank of the stream, called after them the ʿAdwat al-Andalusiyyīn, about 818. These were followed in 826 by refugees from the rebellion against Ziyādat Allah I at Kairouan, who settled on the left bank, the ʿAdwat al-Qarawiyyīn or Qayrawānī Bank. These and other towns, like Nukūr in the Rif,[1] dominated their respective regions, drawing people into their vicinity and compelling recognition by the hill-men of the rugged countryside.

This domination was still to a large extent the product of military occupation and conquest. The Rustamid monarchs controlled the route to the sea at Marsā Farūkh. The twenty years of the reign of Idrīs II at Fez, from the time he came into his kingdom until his death in 829, saw the creation of a family dominion in northern Morocco; the region of Tlemcen was ruled by his cousins, the sons of his uncle Sulaymān, whom his father Idrīs b. ʿAbd Allah had set there in place of Abū Qurra. Southwards the Idrisids crossed the Middle Atlas to the upper valley of the Moulouya river. Leaving the Banū Midrār at Sijilmasa in the Tafilelt on their left, they turned south-westwards along the Saharan slopes of the High Atlas towards the Atlantic. Princes of the line built castles at Tāmdult in the valley of the upper Darʿa, and perhaps also at Igli in the valley of the Sous. In this region the military and political motives were confused with the commercial. The upper Darʿa was rich in silver and copper; the Sous could produce crops such as cotton. The Idrisids were preceded and accompanied by wanderers and merchants from as far away as Libya, coming through Tahert and Sijilmasa to model this 'far Sus' upon the society and the economy of the Djerid, the Jebel Nefusa and the Fezzan. As yet there was no

[1] al-Bakrī, *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik*, ed. and trans. by M. G. de Slane, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, 2nd edn (Algiers, 1911–13; reprinted Paris, 1965), 90ff., trans. 180ff.

question of a direct trade across the desert with the western Sudan.[1] But from al-Yaʿqūbī's vague references to gold and a 'land of Ghast', it is apparent that the old route across the western Sahara, the so-called 'ṭrīq Lamtūnī', followed by the veiled Berber nomads of the desert, was being drawn into the system in much the same way as the easterly routes from Ifrīqiya to the Niger bend and the central Sudan. Meanwhile it would seem that ships went by sea from the port of Massa in the Sous northwards to the Mediterranean.

Although this progressive colonization lacked the unity of the conquest of Sicily, it served to create a Muslim society out of a native population of mountaineers and desert tribesmen. By the ninth century, the *islām* exacted by the first conquerors had become the Islam demanded by Idrīs II when he named his new city of Fez al-ʿAliya, 'the city of 'Alī', in defiance of the Aghlabid city of al-ʿAbbāsiya. It is the Idrisids who may perhaps be credited with the Shiʿite community which according to Ibn Ḥawqal shared a mosque with a Sunnite community in the Sous. More striking is Massa on the coast, which is described as a *ribāṭ* with a large community of holy men. Ibn Ḥawqal in the tenth century considered the religion of these people *ḥashwī*, 'crudely anthropomorphic', but as a Shiʿite himself he was prejudiced.[2] It was probably from the area of the Darʿa and the Sous that Muslims first entered inner Morocco, the lands within the curve of the Atlas between the mountains and the Atlantic, coming over the high passes to the south. Aghmat near Marrakesh was the first place of importance. Behind it in the valley of the Oued Nfiss, the Wadi Niffīs, on the northern side of the High Atlas, appeared a notable colony of holy men, while the town itself became a merchant city of some importance.

The entry of Islam from the north was for a long time peculiar. If Idrīs II did in fact conquer as far as the Oued Nfiss,[3] it was an isolated episode, and is perhaps no more than a variant of the legendary theme of conquest by 'Uqba b. Nāfiʿ.[4] In this south-westerly direction, it is likely that the Idrisids confined themselves within the limits of Roman Mauretania, as Mūsā b. Nuṣayr had done. After the death of Idrīs II in

[1] Cf. M. Brett, 'Ifrīqiya as a market for Saharan trade from the tenth to the twelfth century AD', *Journal of African History*, 1969, 10, 3, 358–9 and note 74.

[2] Ibn Ḥawqal, *ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 91–2 trans. 90. [3] Ibn 'Idhārī, *Bayān*, 1, 211.

[4] Cf. E. Lévi-Provençal, 'Un nouveau récit de la conquête de l'Afrique du Nord par les Arabes', *Arabica Occidentalia*, 1954, 1, 17–43, introducing and translating the work of the fourteenth-century Moroccan author Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm. The narrative, judged by Lévi-Provençal to be based upon an early and accurate tradition, seems to me quite the reverse; its straightforward character as an account of the conquest of the Maṣmūda people of the High Atlas is much more likely to be the product of rationalization than a proof of authenticity.

829, and especially after the death of Yaḥyā II in 859, their dominion was divided among the many princes of the family. Meanwhile in the middle of the ninth century there appeared an eccentric movement among the Barghawāṭa people of the Tamesna, the coastal plain to the south of Casablanca. The prophet Yūnus traced his inspiration to his grandfather Ṣāliḥ and his great-grandfather Tārif, who was said to have succeeded Maysara as the leader of the Kharijites in the west; for this reason the movement is usually ascribed to the events of 739. But according to al-Bakrī, the principal source, Yūnus is also said to have come from Andalus, and his doctrine, that Ṣāliḥ had been sent by God to provide His people with a Berber Qur'ān before he left to come again as the Mahdi, 'the rightly-guided one', after seven successors had sat on the throne, is much too reminiscent of Shi'ite ideas of the ninth and even the tenth century, when the information was supplied to the authorities at Cordoba by a Barghawāṭa delegation. The descendants of Yūnus, rulers equipped with *ḥasham* and *jund*, made annual raids upon their neighbours, especially upon the infidels to the south, for booty and tribute. They seem to illustrate that power of the holy man to arouse enthusiasm for a war of conquest which was apparent in Ifrīqiya in the invasion of Sicily. In this case, however, unhindered by any existing *sulṭān*, the preacher and his followers created their own state. On the far western frontier of Islam, they pointed to the possibility of a new Muslim revolution.

Their contribution, indeed, may have been specific. The conflict engendered in the broad lands between the Oum er-Rbia and the Oued Tensift, between the Barghawāṭa to the north and the peoples, merchants and holy men who came over the High Atlas to Aghmat and the Oued Nfiss to the south, was perhaps the ultimate origin of the similar, more famous movement of the Almoravids of the eleventh century, created by the zeal of Ibn Yāsīn among different peoples far away in the Sahara. Islam, whose North African institutions bound the Maghrib together in a broad, if patchy commonwealth, was in the process of passing far beyond the horizon of the first conquest.

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